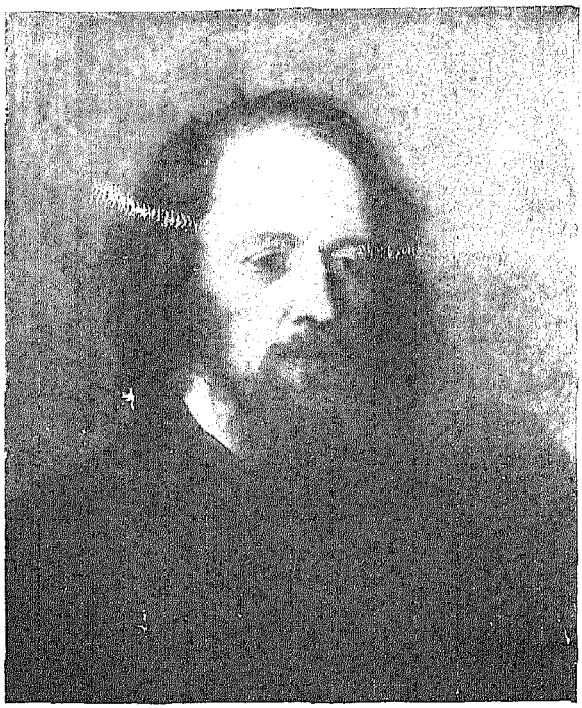


ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

From the picture by G. F. Watts, R.A., O.M., in the possession of Lady Henry Somerset

The Indian Library of English Poets

III

ALFRED TENNYSON

SELECT POEMS

CHOSEN AND EDITED

BY

S. G. DUNN, M.A.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, MUIR CENTRAL COLLEGE, ALLAHABAD
FELLOW OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALLAHABAD



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OF
ENGLISH POETS

Selected and edited, with a General Preface, Introductions and Notes, by S. G. DUNN, M.A., I.E.S.

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I. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.
II. SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.
III. ALFRED TENNYSON.

In Preparation

IV. ROBERT BROWNING.

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GENERAL PREFACE

WALTER PATER, advocating some forty years ago the making of an anthology of Wordsworth's poems, remarked in him the intrusion, from time to time, of 'something tedious and prosaic,' and suggested that there is really in all poets a duality of higher and lower moods, a distinction between 'higher and lower degrees of intensity in the poet's perception of his subject and in his concentration of himself upon his work.' He goes on to tell us that it is requisite, in order to appreciate this distinction, to undergo 'a right discipline of the temper as well as of the intellect.' Those who have, by concentration and collectedness of mind, submitted to this discipline seem, he says, to have passed through a kind of initiation, the abiding effect of which is that they are able 'constantly to distinguish in art, speech, feeling, manners, that which is organic, animated, expressive, from that which is only conventional, derivative, inexpressive.'

These words may serve to indicate the intention of the present editor in producing this library of selections, and to define his function in the work. It seems for many reasons desirable to publish thus, in convenient form, the best poetry of our English poets. There are many people in the modern

world who have little time for reading, and they do not wish to waste that time on what is 'only conventional, derivative, inexpressive.' It may be said, perhaps, that selection is necessary to all fruitful reading, and that the reader should be allowed to make his selection for himself. There are some, indeed, whose taste in literature is naturally sound; they turn instinctively to that which is beautiful and universal in the poets. But such sensitive spirits are few, and fewer still are those in whom training and study, observation and experience, do not quicken and develop the innate artistic sense. The young, especially, are apt to be bored by the 'tedious and prosaic' pages which exist in every poet's work, and to give up prematurely what seems to them an unpleasurable pastime. It is the business of the editor to clear away this rubbish. The poets are the best company in the world; but they are not always at their best, and we need an introduction to their society at the right moment. Once the introduction is made, the reader may be left to continue the acquaintance for himself.

There is also the perpetual presence in our midst of the educator and the examiner. These must have selections to work with. They cannot demand from the student a knowledge of the whole of Tennyson or of Wordsworth, much as they may desire that he will in time become acquainted with those authors in their entirety; but they do ask that the student shall know enough of an author to comprehend his attitude towards life and art; and this cannot be attained

by making use of anthologies compiled from many authors, admirable as these anthologies so often are. For academic purposes some such series as this seemed to be necessary; but it will carry an appeal, we trust, beyond these and meet a wider demand.

For some time there has been growing, in India and all over the East, an ever greater interest in Western civilization, its methods and its ideals. There is no slight danger that the imagination of India may be captured by the purely material aspects of that civilization. The politician and the engineer appear to many as its chief builders; the unseen workers, the 'intangible resources' of it, are too often forgotten. Railways have been carried across deserts; mighty rivers have been harnessed to the use of man; the powers of the heaven and the earth have been subdued by science to his government. These things strike the mind with irresistible force, while those 'household fountains' which are the real springs of national character lie hidden. We need to remember that the soul of a nation, the true ideals of its civilization, are expressed in its poetry; that the poets are the legislators, though 'unacknowledged,' of mankind. 'We want,' as Shelley says, 'the poetry of life.' Without that, the ceaseless movement of the modern world becomes 'but a trouble of ants in the gleam of a million million of suns.' The war in Europe has awakened us all from our illusions, and has shown us this at least, that men are not dead, as cynics thought, to ideals, nor unmoved by moral

aims. We realize now, as Wordsworth told the England of the Napoleonic struggle, that 'There is a spiritual community binding together the living and the dead, the good, the brave, and the wise of all ages.' All poetry is the attempt to express the ideas of that 'spiritual community,' and according to our love and understanding of poetry will be our perception of the reality and efficacy of those ideas.

For those who believe this, here is offered the material for their study. But one warning must be uttered with regard to their use of that material and to their expectation of the good to be gained from it. 'I remember,' says Steele in one of his papers for the *Tatler*, 'to have heard a great painter say, "There are certain faces for certain painters as well as certain subjects for certain poets." This is as true in the choice of studies; and no one will ever relish an author thoroughly well, who would not have been fit company for that author had they lived at the same time.' Much depends, that is to say, upon temperament. We cannot all appreciate the same things or the same poets. Temperament decides our friendships in living society; it is to temperament that we must look for the basis of our literary predilections. But, even so, as the words quoted at the beginning of this preface remind us, it is possible to train the temper as well as the intellect. To one who finds little that appeals to him in some poet we would suggest, 'Try and fit yourself for his company.' Failure to under-

stand or to appreciate is often due, not to incompatibility of temperament, but to lack of experience. Leslie Stephen, writing to a friend, after the death of his wife, remarks, 'Do you sympathize with me when I say that the only writer whom I have been able to read with pleasure through this nightmare is Wordsworth? I used not to care for him specially, but now I love him. He is so thoroughly manly and tender and honest, as far as his lights go, that he seems to me to be the only consoler.' Let no one, then, be discouraged if, at first, the deeper meaning of the poets seems to elude him. There will come a time when life, the teacher of all things, will reveal, by a sudden flash of pleasure or through the slow processes of pain, what once was hidden from our immaturity. In joy and in sorrow, be sure of it, we shall be glad of the company of the poets. And in those long tracts of our journey that are marked by neither in any great measure, it will be good for us to keep our eyes clear, our intellects alert, our sympathies warm with that 'admiration, life, and love' by which all poetry lives.

In this Library will be found, it is hoped, only what is 'organic, animated, expressive,' in each of the poets selected. Only such notes have been added as seemed indispensable for an understanding of the poems. Critical introductions, it has been said, are the curse of modern editions; and there are so many excellent histories of English literature and so many monographs on the several poets that repetition may well be avoided. But for purposes of easy reference

a table of important dates has been prefixed to each volume, together with some exposition of the poet's attitude towards life as expressed in his poems. The editor has endeavoured throughout to keep in mind the words of Tennyson: 'Poetry is like shot silk with many glancing colours, and every reader must find his own interpretation according to his ability and according to his sympathy with the poet.'

The text has been taken from the Oxford editions of the Oxford University Press, to the editors and publishers of which I desire to offer my thanks.

S. G. DUNN.

ALLAHABAD.

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INTRODUCTION

ALFRED TENNYSON was born at Somersby in Lincolnshire, on August 6, 1809, his father being the Rector of Somersby. He was educated for three years at the Louth School, but completed his studies with his brother Charles under his father at home. The chief dates of his life are as follows:

1828. Tennyson matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge.
1829. Won the Chancellor's prize medal at Cambridge for the poem *Timbuctoo.*
1830. Visit to Spain and the Pyrenees with his friend Hallam.
1831. Death of Tennyson's father.
1832. Tour up the Rhine with Hallam.
1833. Death of Hallam at Vienna.
1838–40. Tours in the British Isles.
1844. Loss of much money in a manufacturing speculation.
1845. Granted a civil list pension of £200 a year.
1850. Married Emily Sellwood. Appointed Poet Laureate in succession to Wordsworth.
1853. Tennyson makes his home at Farringford in the Isle of Wight, but travels abroad or in the British Isles every year.
1868. Builds his house at Aldworth, Sussex, as a summer residence.
1879. Death of his brother, Charles Tennyson Turner.
1883. Cruise with Gladstone to Copenhagen in the *Pembroke Castle.*
1884. Tennyson receives a peerage.
1886. Death of his younger son Lionel.
1892. Death of Tennyson at Aldworth on October 6.

The official biography of Tennyson is published by Macmillan & Co., in two volumes. It is written by his son, Hallam, Lord Tennyson. A shorter version of it will be found in the one-volume edition of the poems with notes (Macmillan, 1913).

For appreciations of the work of Tennyson see the following:

Stopford Brooke: *Tennyson.*
Andrew Lang: *Tennyson* (Modern English Writers).
Sir Alfred Lyall: *Tennyson* (English Men of Letters).
A. C. Bradley: *Commentary on 'In Memoriam.'*
E. H. Sneath: *The Mind of Tennyson.*
Prof. G. Saintsbury, in his *Later Nineteenth Century.*

Also:

Prof. H. Walker, in his *Literature of the Victorian Era.*
Mr. G. K. Chesterton, in his *Victorian Age in Literature* (Home Univ. Series). And vol. xiii of *Cambridge History of English Literature.*

The complete single-volume edition of the poems was published in 1894, but this has been superseded by the edition of 1913, which contains Tennyson's own notes and a memoir by his son. The publishers are Messrs. Macmillan & Co. The chief dates of publication of Tennyson's works are:

1827. *Poems by Two Brothers* (Alfred and Charles Tennyson).
1830. *Poems, chiefly Lyrical.*
1832. *Poems* (dated 1833).
1842. *Poems* (2 volumes).
1847. *The Princess.*
1850. *In Memoriam.*
1852. *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.*
1855. *Maud, and Other Poems.*
1859. *Idylls of the King* (four only).
1864. *Enoch Arden,* &c.
1869. *The Holy Grail, and Other Poems.*
1872. *Gareth and Lynette,* &c.
1875. *Queen Mary: a Drama.*
1876. *Harold.*
1880. *Ballads, and Other Poems.*
1884. *Becket.*
1885. *Tiresias, and Other Poems.*
1886. *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After,* &c.
1889. *Demeter, and Other Poems.*
1892. *The Foresters,* &c.
1892. *The Death of Oenone, and Other Poems.*

(The last volume was published posthumously.)

Tennyson has recorded that when, as a boy of fourteen, he heard of the death of Byron he felt stunned, 'as if the world had been darkened,' and he could only rush out into a wood and carve on the sandstone rock, 'Byron is dead.' The death of Tennyson himself in October 1892 made a somewhat similar impression upon the minds of those of us who were then just entering boyhood. His were the first poems we

had read; he was the great representative of the Victorian age, which was then passing away; he seemed to embody in himself all the ideals and principles which our fathers had admired and followed. Never before had the death of a poet caused such a national manifestation of sorrow, or elicited from people not specially interested in literature so sincere a tribute of respect as was paid to his memory. Others have had their period of popularity and been forgotten while they yet lived; Tennyson kept his hold upon the public for sixty years, to the very day of his death. There were, and are, critics, it is true, who affirmed that his best work was done before 1850; there were many in his later days who turned away from him to Browning and Swinburne; but even these would admit that he was never negligible as the older Wordsworth was negligible, nor could they deny that with the general public Tennyson was still the national poet above all others.

In that epithet, perhaps, lies the secret of his popularity, and the explanation of the gradual weakening of the appeal of his poetry at the present day. He was essentially representative of his times; he was always in touch with the national feeling; he had, in most cases, foreseen the changes that were coming and was prepared, when they came, to guide, control, or stimulate public opinion. 'I fear,' says Scott, in one of his letters, 'our poetical taste is in general much more linked with our prejudices of birth, of education, and of habitual thinking than our vanity will allow us to suppose.' His contemporaries felt that they were safe with Tennyson. He possessed, it seemed to them, that quality which Englishmen admire more than any other; he was—

> 'Rich in saving common sense,
> And, as the greatest only are,
> In his simplicity sublime.'

He was no mere literary man. Like Scott, he held life above literature, conduct above style, experience above books.

The great poets of the earlier part of the century had made but a sad business of their private lives. Byron, Shelley, Coleridge—they were all cited in illustration of the saying that genius is eccentric. Here was a genius who was certainly not thus eccentric. Aubrey de Vere speaks of his 'gift of common sense united with that of imagination which made him learned in life, the life of the Humanities.' Carlyle writes: 'Alfred always from the beginning took a grip of the right side of every question.' In a letter of Fitz-Gerald's (1842) we have his opinion that 'Alfred, whatever he may think, cannot trifle.' To 'old Fitz,' indeed, it seemed sometimes a pity that he could not; there was something deadening, he came to think, about this undeviating correctness. 'I thought,' he writes, 'that if he had lived an active life, as Scott and Shakespeare; or even ridden, shot, drunk, and played the devil, as Byron did, he would have done much more and talked about it much less. . . . It is the cursed inactivity of this nineteenth century which has spoiled Alfred.'

Born in the same year as Gladstone and Darwin, he was always in touch with the political movements and scientific research of his time. In politics he kept that spirit of compromise which characterized the Victorian age. The three lyrics of 1842—'You ask me why, though ill at ease,' 'Of old sat Freedom on the heights,' 'Love thou thy land with love far-brought'—express that spirit perfectly, while in the two *Locksley Hall* poems he gave utterance to the misgivings and anxieties which could not but arise in a mind that was able to read the signs of the times. He saw the danger of competitive industrialism; he was as intolerant of the optimism of the Manchester School as Ruskin. 'I do not the least mind,' he said, 'if England, when the people are less ignorant and more experienced in self-government, eventually becomes a democracy.' But a sudden change, he felt, was worse than futile. His ideal was, we may infer, an aristo-

cracy of intellect and character; that is what he meant when he said, 'I am of the same politics as Shakespeare, Bacon, and every sane man.' He was not free from many of the prejudices of his class. He believed in the insularity of England—he was impressed with the Teutonic idea. He could speak of the 'red fool-fury of the Seine,' of 'the blind hysterics of the Celt'; his visits to the Continent had no broadening effect on his sympathies. 'I am struck, on returning from France,' he said, 'with the look of good sense in the London people.' He had not the catholicity of Browning in the matter of nationalities. Knowing what we do of the state of the rural districts in 1847, we find his remark on the squires absurdly inadequate: 'I wish they would be a little kinder to the poor.' His sympathy savours to us of condescension and patronage; one has an uncomfortable suspicion that he acquiesced in the theory that the land of England was the property of the landlords, the Vivians and Aylmers.

But in some ways Tennyson was ahead of his contemporaries, and many of his ideas, accepted and familiar as they are now, were to them new and almost revolutionary. *The Princess* may not seem to us to deal particularly well with the position of women or their higher education, but to raise the question at all was a novelty in 1847. When Tennyson remarked then in conversation that the two great social questions impending in England were 'the housing and education of the poor man before making him our master, and the higher education of women,' he was making a very shrewd estimate of future problems. Again, in 1870, we find him saying, 'How strange England cannot see her true policy lies in a close union with our colonies!' and 'We ought to have all boys at school drilled, so that we may be more ready for defensive war than now.' The latter provision he had advocated as early as 1859 when he wrote *Riflemen, form*, and bitter experience has taught us the

wisdom of his scheme. He was the first of our Imperial poets at a time when the idea of the Empire was, if embodied at all, disregarded. 'I always feel with the Empire,' he wrote to Sir Henry Parkes; and he realized that only in a strong federation of the constituent parts of the Empire could the peace of the world be secured. At a time when retrenchment was the popular platform of politicians he raised his voice against the false economy of cutting down the naval estimates: 'The fleet of England is her all in all.' Finally, he recognized the importance of India, the strength or weakness which her strength or weakness imparts to the rest of the Empire, and as he grew older he was more and more attracted to the philosophy and poetry of the East. Something of this may have been due to his son's brief connexion with India and to the influence of his friend FitzGerald, but it is also evident throughout his poems that the East always had a fascination of its own for him. *Akbar's Dream* is wonderful work for a man over eighty years old.

In his attitude towards science, even more than in his political opinions, Tennyson gave a lead to his generation. Scientific experts such as Tyndall, Lockyer, and Lodge have testified to his knowledge; to read *In Memoriam*, and remember that it was published nine years before *The Origin of Species*, is to realize that Tennyson was not merely an adroit adapter of other men's ideas, but a thinker of very great power. He anticipated a controversy which did not in fact arise till ten years later, when Darwin's theory roused the opposition of the Churches—a controversy which, it is true, should not have arisen at all, but which had to be fought out once it had arisen. We may not now consider the position which Tennyson took up impregnable, or even strong; but we must remember that both sides have changed their ground since then; if Tennyson is out of date, so also is Darwin. A remark of Tennyson's, made in 1833, is worth, from the philosophical point of view, the whole of *In*

Memoriam; on looking through a microscope he said, 'Strange that these wonders should draw some men to God and repel others. No more reason in the one than in the other.' But, quite apart from its controversial value, or its power of consolation, qualities for which his contemporaries valued it, *In Memoriam* will always endure as a work of art, just as *Paradise Lost* has endured. We need not accept the theology of Milton to admire his poetry; nor should we deny the beauty of *In Memoriam* because its reasoning does not convince us. Tennyson wrote in a time of doubt and restlessness; the old order was passing away, and men's minds were troubled. Some were for seeking peace by the way of emancipation from all dogma; it seemed to them better to affirm nothing than to affirm that which could not certainly be proved. They could not hope; their sole attempt was to avoid despair. Of such were Arnold and Clough. As an effectual force in life, as a factor making for happiness, there can be no doubt that Tennyson's creed was better than theirs; to 'trust the larger hope' was for him and his contemporaries the only way to keep a wholesome heart. Others —as we know—were not content with such vague aspirations; the Tractarians and the Sacerdotalists were militant for dogma; ritual, to them, was one of the means of faith. There was much in the Oxford Movement that attracted Tennyson; the attempt to revive mediaevalism encouraged him in his work on the Arthurian legends, and indeed in his treatment of the legend of the Holy Grail we may find his own feelings about the whole movement.

> '"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the King, "for such
> As thou art is the vision, not for these."'

He felt the beauty of rites and ceremonies, but he also felt that an infallible creed could not be reached without surrender of the intellect; it was like Merlin's 'Siege Perilous.

> '"Perilous for good or ill; for there," he said,
> "No man could sit but he should lose himself."'

He saw, too, that a return to the dogmatism of the older faith was impossible under the changed conditions. Man was no longer the undisputed lord of nature; his world was no longer the centre of the universe. 'Man is so small,' he said; 'but a fly on the wheel.' He had learned the lesson of science, and refused to frame hypotheses, much less a dogma. He had his reward; by avoiding the two extremes of Newman on the one side and of Arnold and the agnostic poets on the other, he came gradually to a firm faith in final good, and the last poem that he wrote is full of a life which is stronger than any belief:

> 'For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
> The flood may bear me far,
> I hope to see my Pilot face to face
> When I have crost the bar.'

When we consider this long life, we cannot but remark the universality of his mind and the versatility of his art. He was interested in all the great questions that came up; there was hardly one of them with which he did not deal. He was always at his best in the lyric, but a comparison of his early with his later manner will show how he advanced even in this branch of his art. But his range was much wider than this. Consider successively *The Princess*, *In Memoriam*, *Maud*, *The Idylls*. We may differ about the measure of achievement in this or that attempt, but in each, at any rate, a new thing was attempted. In 1875, when over sixty years of age, he breaks altogether fresh ground with a series of dramas, a sign of wonderful vitality and freshness, if we recall that other poets, Wordsworth and Swinburne, for instance, were reduced at a much earlier age to imitating themselves. In his last volume alone, published in 1892, there is as much variety as one can find in the whole life's work of some poets, and *The Silent Voices* is as fine as anything he did at the height of his power.

It has seemed necessary to bring out these facts, first, to

explain the popularity of Tennyson in his life-time, and, secondly, to show that there were real grounds for that popularity, since in the recent reaction from all ways Victorian there has been some danger of depreciating him; it has even become fashionable in certain circles to say that 'one cannot read Tennyson.' Now that is, to put it bluntly, affected nonsense. It is inevitable, no doubt, that, under the changing conditions of life—and in the last twenty years those conditions have changed very rapidly—men should find the old ways of thought, and even the old modes of expression, satisfy them no longer; we know—

> 'That all, with one consent, praise new-born gawds,
> Though they are made and moulded of things past;
> And give to dust that is a little gilt
> More laud than gilt o'er-dusted.'

Yet, even if there were no universal element in Tennyson, he would always be worth reading as the representative of his age; his poetry would still be of permanent interest as an historical document, as the record of a time which, whatever we may think of it, saw great men do great deeds, and wise men live manly lives—men who took themselves and everything else in the world seriously, but also knew how to laugh. But anyone who can recognize excellence when he sees it knows that Tennyson will be read for more reasons than that. The fashion of our thinking passes away, and our philosophies are made alms for oblivion; but great art does not pass away; it is a joy for ever; and as a great artist Tennyson must endure.

It is his art that concerns us more properly here. Let us look at it more in detail. One would have supposed that the romantic poets, Coleridge and Wordsworth, would have been the first to be known by the young Tennyson; but he tells us himself that, at eight years old, Thomson was 'the only poet I knew,' and his first effort in poetry was in Thomsonian blank verse. This is worth remembering, for

the influence of Thomson may be found in him more often than has yet been pointed out. Such lines as the following taught him much:

> 'In Cairo's crowded streets
> The impatient merchant, wondering, waits in vain,
> And Mecca saddens at the long delay.'
> (*Seasons*: 'Summer,' 977.

Or these:

> 'Nor can the tortured wave here find repose:
> But, raging still amid the shaggy rocks,
> Now flashes o'er the scattered fragments, now
> Aslant the hollowed channel rapid darts;
> And, falling fast from gradual slope to slope,
> With wild infracted course and lessened roar,
> It gains a safer bed and steals at last
> Along the mazes of the quiet vale.'
> ('Summer,' 600.)

Here we find that subtle use of alliteration, and the accommodation of cadence or sound to sense, which were afterwards characteristic of Tennyson's verse, and of which no better example can be given than the lines:

> 'Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
> The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
> And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

From Thomson, too, he probably imbibed his love of the compound epithet, for it is very common in Thomson; open *The Seasons* at random, and you will find such examples as 'steep-ascending,' 'moss-lined,' 'woodbine-wrought,' 'forest-crowned.'

From Thomson, he tells us, he proceeded to Pope, Scott, and Byron, and then to the classics. Byron was always a favourite with him, but there is little trace of his influence in his prosody. The perfection of Pope appealed to him; he was more classical in his sympathies than romantic, as all his statements about his art show. 'The artist is known by his self-limitation,' he says; and 'It is the concise and perfect work which will last.' Of the Latin poets Virgil was his

great master. From him he learned the magical power of the single word and phrase:

'All the chosen coin of fancy flashing out from many a golden phrase.'
All the charm of all the Muses often flowering in a lonely word.'

He is like the seventeenth-century prose writers, and R. L. Stevenson, in this happy gift of words.

Of Beattie I can find no mention in the record of his reading, but there are passages in *The Minstrel* that seem to have left an echo in his mind, e.g.:

'Art, empire, earth itself, to change are doomed;
Earthquakes have raised to heaven the humble vale,
And gulfs the mountain's mighty mass entombed,
And where th' Atlantic rolls wide continents have bloomed.'

Or this:

'Southward a mountain rose with easy swell,
Whose long, long groves eternal murmur made,
And toward the western sun a streamlet fell.'

Or this:

'The yellow moonlight sleeps on all the hills.'

Or again:

'The crimson cloud, blue main, and mountains grey,
And lake, dim-gleaming on the smoky lawn;
Far to the west the long, long vale withdrawn,
Where twilight loves to linger for a while.'

The last extract reminds us of *The Lotos-eaters*, and we can see that Tennyson's skill in this kind was no miraculous birth, but the result of much study of his predecessors' work and methods. It was the same with metre. He was able to profit by all the experiments in prosody which the Romantics had made, and by a greater use of equivalence and substitution he secured an appearance of freedom which was obtained, in fact, by strict adherence to rule. But, for his prosodic technique, we must refer the reader to Prof. Saintsbury's *History of English Prosody*; suffice it to say here that Tennyson was always trying new experiments, and led the way in metrical matters for all nineteenth-century poets.

'Most can raise the flowers now,
For all have got the seed.'

In tracing the development of Tennyson's art the year 1833 is of importance. Up to that date he was, in the main, a pictorial poet, a worshipper, like Keats, of visible beauty. The influence of Keats was predominant, and the faults of the early poems are just the faults for which Keats had been censured—an excess of ornament and prettiness, a lusciousness of imagery which went beyond the sensuous. To these faults the criticism of the 1833 volume was directed, and Tennyson set himself to 'the purging and subliming' of his work. Henceforth, says FitzGerald, 'It is fine to see how in each succeeding poem the smaller ornaments and fancies drop away and leave the grand ideas single.'

But there were several new elements in this pictorial art of Tennyson. He was an observer. Wordsworth had taught him that, with his injunction to 'keep the eye on the object'; but his method was different from Wordsworth's. He found it necessary to make his sketch on the spot, to weave the landscape into words before he forgot its features, while Wordsworth, as we know, relied on recollection and meditation. The result is that Tennyson's descriptions are more accurate in detail; they are, at times, almost photographic, and at first he occasionally spoiled a line in his eagerness to record the thing as it was seen. It is significant that he altered the original lines in *The Miller's Daughter*—

'Beneath those gummy chestnut-buds
That glistened in the April blue.'

to—

'Below the chestnuts, when their buds
Were glistening to the breezy blue.'

From Coleridge he had learned the value of colour; his 'dark faces pale against that rosy flame,' in *The Lotos-eaters*, is quite in the manner of the older poet. But it was the art Turner that influenced him most, for it is in the painting

of Turner that we find, for the first time, fidelity to detail and regard for colour combined with an ideal atmosphere through which the landscape is seen. Ruskin remarks on the reality which Turner can by 'imaginative intellect' impart to such scenes as his 'Garden of the Hesperides,' and Tennyson had this same power of creating a mental impression, so that a landscape invented for the setting of a story should accord with the mood of the subject. This is what is meant when we speak of the 'ideal scenery' of *Oenone* or *The Lotos-eaters*. The land

'In which it seemed always afternoon,'

is nowhere on this earth, but it does not seem to us unreal, and it is exactly the land where we should expect to find the gentle and languid lotos-eaters.

On the one hand, then, Tennyson can be as faithful to detail as the most minute of the Pre-Raphaelite school of painters—Rossetti, Holman Hunt, Brown, Millais, and Burne-Jones, all of whom he knew and admired—and, on the other, he can draw the character, or spirit, out of a landscape just as Watts or Sargent drew the character out of a man in their portraits.

This power of observation and love of visible beauty was in part a matter of temperament, and in part the effect of environment. He was by nature attracted by externals. When writing to Monckton Milnes about a book on his tour in Greece, Tennyson tells him, 'I hope that in your book you have given us much glowing description and little mysticism.' That is indicative of his tastes, and we are not surprised to find him admitting later (in 1839), 'I am not so able as in old years to commune alone with nature.' For, as Wordsworth found and declared in *Tintern Abbey*, the passion for nature which depends solely on the eye passes away with the passing of youth, and Tennyson could not go on, as Wordsworth went on, to find in nature a life and

spirit beneath the visible. His environment was different; scientific research had altered for him the conception of nature. He could not think of the earth as the 'homely nurse' of man; it was for him rather the battle-field of forces inimical, or, at the best, indifferent to man. If we compare the tentative questioning of his *Higher Pantheism* with the confident vision of *Tintern Abbey*, we shall perceive the enormous difference between the two poets. Nature, 'red in tooth and claw,' could never be 'all in all' to Tennyson. It gave him a world of phenomena, a series of pleasant pictures, but that was not enough. For spiritual satisfaction he had to saturate the landscape with human associations and human feelings. And this he did with wonderful effect. In his English idylls, in *The Talking Oak* and *Walking to the Mail*, he achieved something quite new. He linked together, as it were, the land and the people who lived on it. In these poems we feel that English life and the land of England are inextricably associated; in them there is a love of the land and its associations which makes us understand patriotism. Crabbe had done something like it, and Fitz-Gerald, who was a great admirer of Crabbe, may have given him a hint. In our own time Kipling has succeeded in the same way. In *His Son's Wife*, for example, he has worked out in prose the same idea that inspired *The Talking Oak*.

It was clear, then, quite early that Tennyson would never be content with the cult of purely physical, or intellectual, beauty. He was never in danger of becoming a mere 'aesthete'; the feeling for the human was too strong in him. Yet he was so keen in his efforts to perfect his art, and to learn all there was to learn about technique, that some of his contemporaries did think there was this danger; they thought that he cared only about art, like Keats in his earlier poems. But in Tennyson the artist never dominated the man. *The Palace of Art* makes that clear. Here, under the symbolism of poetry, he settles conclusively the moral

question of the place of art in life. The soul, at first, 'joys to feel herself alive' in the world of beauty:

> 'Lord over nature, Lord of the visible earth,
> Lord of the senses five.'

She will take her ease in the lordly pleasure-house of art in god-like isolation:

> 'I take possession of man's mind and deed.
> I care not what the sects may brawl.
> I sit as God, holding no form of creed,
> But contemplating all.'

We are reminded, as we read, of Oscar Wilde's *Theoretikos*.

> 'It mars my calm; wherefore, in dreams of art
> And loftiest culture, I would stand apart,
> Neither for God nor for His enemies.'

Tennyson anticipated and refuted the heresy of 'art for art's sake.' The soul is struck down, 'like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,' and—

> 'Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
> God, before whom ever lie bare
> The abysmal deeps of Personality,
> Plagued her with sore despair.'

It is to the same moral purpose that he turns the classical myths or legends. He uses *Oenone* and the *Lotos-eaters* to point universal truths. If we compare these with his later classical poems, *Tithonus* and *Tiresias*, we shall see that in those he is much nearer to the Greek spirit as Keats conceived it; he has expressed his morality elsewhere—he can afford to give himself up to the calm perfection of pure art. He was always to be pictorial and descriptive, fond of the concrete, tenacious of that which can be seen and handled, akin in many ways to his own *Northern Farmer*; he never despised the primitive. 'All fine-natured men,' he once said, 'know what is good to eat.' But the tendency to blend thought with art was always in him, and the circumstances of his life and times concurred to bring this tendency out.

In the year 1833 his friend Hallam died. The loss was

overwhelming; the world was changed for him. He felt that if life was ever again to be tolerable he must find some consolation based on a reasonable belief in man's destiny. His poetry became more serious in tone. The first necessity was to keep a good heart. *Ulysses*, with its splendid challenge to courage and adventure, preceded *In Memoriam*, and gave, as he himself said, the thought of it more simply. One must go forward and brave the difficulties of life, trusting to beat one's music out. The effect of this experience is manifest in the two volumes published in 1842. Spedding, in his review of them, noted the change: 'Moral and spiritual traits of character are more dwelt upon in place of external scenery and circumstance. He addresses himself more to the heart and less to the ear and eye.'

Public events co-operated with his personal experience to induce this 'high seriousness.' The famous 'Tract 90,' which started the Oxford movement, was published in 1841, and not long afterwards Maurice inaugurated that campaign of social service in the name of religion which was later called Christian Socialism, and of which Kingsley became the propagandist in his *Yeast* and *Alton Locke*. The Chartist agitation, dangerous as it seemed while it lasted, came to nothing; but the tenets of Socialism continued to be discussed, and revolutionary movements on the Continent attracted men's sympathy or antagonism. The demand for Free Trade, and for the repeal of the Corn Laws, supported by the arguments of Cobden and the oratory of Bright, roused the feeling of the country. Reform was in the air, and it seemed as if great things were attainable.

Tennyson's mind was impressionable. He turned it this way and that, and made his poetry the expression of the modern spirit. *The Golden Year* and *Locksley Hall* reflect the speculations and hopes of the time. The 'silks and fruits and spices, clear of toll,' the 'Parliament of man, the federation of the world,' and the other dreams of these

poems were but a part of the general 'yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield.' It was a restless time, but an interesting time, and the men who lived then enjoyed life; *The Pickwick Papers* had just come out (1836–7), and *Punch* was at its best. If Tennyson did not share the boisterous high spirits of some of his contemporaries, and never wrote an *Ode to the North-East Wind*, or a *Hunting of the Snark*, yet he was in 'speech and speculation free and plenteous,' as Carlyle describes him. FitzGerald speaks of him in 1846 as being in 'a rickety state of body,' and he seems to have been, for a time, a victim of hypochondria, 'a man solitary and sad, as certain men are, dwelling in an element of gloom, carrying a bit of chaos about him, in short, which he is manufacturing into cosmos' (Carlyle's letter to Emerson, 1842).

He was, in fact, composing *In Memoriam*, though the whole was not published till 1850, and we shall understand that poem better if we keep in mind this description of the man, and read the stanzas as they were written, in a series rather than as a whole. One may find, it is true, a master thought which underlies the parts and connects them, but it is as a series of beautiful lyrics rather than as a philosophical whole that *In Memoriam* will give most pleasure.

Another poem which illustrates this temperamental gloom of Tennyson is *Maud* (1855), and this also should be read in the same way. It is, of course, dramatic, just as *Hamlet* is dramatic, but to invent with such imaginative sympathy a character of this kind is only given to men who themselves have lived through the 'dumb hour, clothed in black,' when Time seems 'a maniac scattering dust, and Life a Fury slinging flame.'

There is no need here to discuss at length these and the other longer poems of Tennyson. His own notes should be enough to put one on the right track, and a considerable amount of somewhat platitudinous commentary by various

critics is already in existence. I shall attempt merely to suggest a way of approach.

The Princess (1847) anticipated, as has been pointed out, the problem of the higher education of women; but its reference was wider, to marriage and the home. Tennyson was essentially English in his reverence for the relationship of husband and wife, and in his love of the home as the centre of affection and the source of all social happiness. In *Dora* and the other English idylls he had drawn, as Wordsworth had drawn, upon these 'household fountains.' He returned to the theme in the *Idylls* and in his last years, in *Romney's Remorse*. His opinions on this subject were, as in politics, the opinions 'of all sensible men.' Men of genius had not, in the past, been so orthodox; Byron and Shelley were sad cases for the moralist. But if Tennyson avoided the errors of genius he was also lacking here in its insight. He had not that sympathetic knowledge of the nature of women which Wordsworth had; he was more like Milton in his attitude towards them. One suspects that when he pictured the coming of 'the statelier Eden back to men' it was Eve in her submissive, and not in her rebellious, mood that pleased his fancy. The French complain of Tennyson's inability to depict passion; and, in fact, that complaint is justified; we cannot imagine him writing the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, or certain of the poems of Swinburne. But it may be that we have here not a real deficiency of feeling, but a deliberate self-limitation. We are surprised when Wordsworth tells us,

'Strange fits of passion have I known,'

because he says very little about them; and Tennyson, too, believed in reticence. In any case, we should take from a poet what he offers us and enjoy that, without demanding something else which he either cannot or will not give. So with *The Princess*. The poem is a 'medley,' a pleasant fantasy;

it is not an orderly treatise on the relations of the sexes, and it is our own fault if we treat it as such and are disappointed with the conclusion. Given the characters as they are in the poem—and they are all as fantastic almost as those in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—the conclusion reached is natural enough.

The same may be said of *Maud*. The hero is mawkish and unsatisfactory, but that is just what he is meant to be. It may be very shocking to the pacifists that he is roused from his lethargy by his country going to war, and it may be a point against him in the eyes of the militant that he does not join the army whose departure for the front he is cheering as the poem ends; but there are young men of that type, and they were not unknown in the Great War. Much of the criticism of both these poems is, if analysed, sheer petulance.

With *The Idylls of the King*, the first four of which were published in 1859, and the rest at intervals between 1869 and 1885, the case is different. Tennyson designed the *Idylls* to form a great epic; he considered the Arthurian legend, as found in Malory, 'the greatest of all poetical subjects'; Arthur was to be his Agamemnon, the 'great and complete man.' We are told by his son that he had a 'more or less perfected scheme in his head over thirty years.' He failed in the attempt to carry it out. The *Idylls* were received with popular applause, but subsequent opinion has been more and more unfavourable. What are the causes?

The essential of an epic is the story. In the legend of Arthur, Tennyson started with a good story, but he tried to make it better. He was not content with telling how the king of a rugged people lived a life of noble service, endeavouring with his glorious company of the 'Table Round' to civilize the world before its time, and won by the splendid failure of his end a place in the hearts of men for ever: he wished to point a moral and adorn his tale; he followed the lure of allegory, and wandered into all sorts of bypaths in

the pursuit of it. What the allegory in the *Idylls* exactly is nobody seems to know. We are told that Arthur is the soul of man at war with the senses; 'from the great deep to the great deep he goes.' Tennyson himself wavered in his conception; at one time it was the Protestant religion, or the Church of England; at another, it was the British constitution; at yet another, the court of the good Queen Victoria. Whatever it was, it spoiled the story; the gusto of the adventure was gone.

Another important element in epic is character. If we consider the men of the *Iliad*, or the *Odyssey*, we shall find that we know them; they are real men for us; they hunger and thirst before us, as the men we meet to-day. But the men of the *Idylls* are not real to us; they are embodiments of this or that virtue, of this or that vice; they are generosity, jealousy, chastity, greed; they are the puppets of a 'morality' play. They move in a mist of unreality and sham. The fault is not that Tennyson fails to reproduce the mediaeval atmosphere; in a work of art anachronism never matters. Carlyle, Morris, and Rossetti are probably just as unhistorical; but—they are convincing. Nor is it that Tennyson introduces modern ideas into his picture of chivalry; Shakespeare makes Henry V talk unadulterated Elizabethan, and the theatre applauds to a man. The fault lies deeper. We feel that the events of the *Idylls* could never happen, its men and women could never exist.

The result is that we are affected quite otherwise than Tennyson intended. He meant to show up adultery as the ugly thing it is; but, in the result, Launcelot and Guinevere are the two people in the story that capture our sympathies. He covers it all up too prettily; instead of saying roundly that the man was treacherously deceiving his friend and King, he turns a phrase:

> 'His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
> And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.'

That is the sort of sentiment that causes our French neighbours to speak of our 'hypocrisy' in these matters, and that is the sort of language that pervades the *Idylls*. The outlines are blurred lines where they should be bold; the colours are toned down where they should be crude. If we compare Vivien, for example, as the study of a clever and unscrupulous woman, as she is meant to be, with Becky Sharp, in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, we shall realize the extent and the cause of the failure. The Arthurian lyrics and the earlier *Morte d'Arthur* show what Tennyson could do when he was free from the burden of an allegory or a moral: these attain the right effect. That battle among the mountains by the winter sea, and the weirdness of it all, take hold of us; we hear the sea-wind singing and the waters lapping on the crag, and when Arthur, in the wrath of a dying King, exclaims—

> 'But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
> I will arise and slay thee *with my hands*,'

we know that this is exactly what an old warrior would say. But the Arthur of the later *Idylls* would probably have said,

> 'Lo! disobedience is a grievous sin,
> And I am grieved, yea, sorely grieved with thee.'

The failure of Tennyson to tell a story, or to substantiate character, in the *Idylls* prepares us for the similar failure of the plays. It was a fine effort to start writing for the stage at sixty-five years of age, and, if industry in composition and enthusiasm for the theatre could make a dramatist, the effort would have succeeded. The idea was to 'portray the making of England' in *Harold*, *Becket*, and *Queen Mary*; *The Foresters* was to fill up a gap in the history, the transition period. The acting of Irving secured a triumph at the time for *Becket* (1884), but the plays are disappointing. The plots do not grip; the characters do not convince. Tennyson took great trouble in preparing them; historically they are accurate enough; there is authority for nearly every word spoken; but somehow they are not alive. It is rather

surprising, when one considers it, this lack of dramatic power in Tennyson; only when his characters speak in dialogue, as in *The Northern Farmer*, are they real. He was so skilful in painting birds and flowers and landscape that we might have expected him to do equally well with human beings. And sometimes he does. His 'plump head-waiter of the "Cock"' lives, and 'Will Waterproof' is human enough; but he has no gallery of men and women such as Browning can produce for our recognition and remembrance. One supposes that his love of retirement and hatred of crowds had something to do with it; he liked men, but he did not wish to see too much of them. He could relish a Falstaff when introduced by a Shakespeare, but he would never have discovered him for himself. He had the exclusiveness of his class and time; he was, in other words, a Victorian.

And here we come upon the real reason for whatever dissatisfaction there may be at the present time not only with Tennyson, but with the society, its conventions and ideals, which he represented with such faithfulness. That society was held together by a cautious compromise, a refusal to push arguments home to their logical conclusions, an agreement to put off definite decisions. Men believed in the 'Balance of Power' in Europe; in their conviction that a balance can always be maintained by slight adjustments of weight to this side or that, they shut their eyes to the fact that these adjustments cause continual unrest, and may result, at any moment, in a collapse. They had been taught that England is an island, and they refused to see that by colonization and commerce she had become a world-power with obligations as wide as the world. We will accept the Empire, they said in effect, but we will continue to govern ourselves as if it did not exist. They believed in the Party System, in the balance of power in domestic politics, and, in the fascinating game played at Westminster, national progress was too often sacrificed to secure the immediate

triumph of this or that party. They believed in certain economic laws, as they called them, and did not allow themselves to realize that hunger, and thirst, and the desire for personal property, are more potent motives among men than any catchwords. They believed in the Christian religion, but they felt dimly that certain hypotheses of science and certain actions of everyday practice were inconsistent with their beliefs, and they compromised accordingly in a suspension of judgement concerning religion and social morality. They were busy with many activities, and in such circumstances, for a time, decision may be postponed and a negative attitude advantageously maintained. But at last the 'cool hour' must come, the problem insist on its solution; and for us, their successors, the hour has struck. We can no longer put things by with their easy manner of compromise; we have to take sides. We look back to their leisurely optimism and are impatient of it. The speed of modern life has increased; things happen more quickly now, and one must be prepared. The motor-car and the aeroplane are symbols of our state. And, if we are more impatient of delay and compromise, we are also, superficially at least, more frank. Subjects are discussed in our theatres, and in our novels, which a few years ago were never mentioned in public. We pride ourselves upon our realism; nothing but sham is shocking to us. Even our poets do not spare us; the language of Mr. Masefield conforms to the Wordsworthian standard that the language of poetry does not essentially differ from the language of prose, but it is doubtful whether Wordsworth would have altogether welcomed his blasphemous navvies and deck-hands! For good or ill, we have parted from the world of the *Idylls*, and our 'great sirs' are asked no longer, as in the *Princess*, to 'give up their parks some dozen times a year to let the people breathe,' but to give them up altogether, with many more of their privileges. The 'Tory member's elder son' has gone across the 'narrow

seas' to fight for the France which, he thanked God, was 'kept off' by them from our Britain, and our master-spirit is a man of that Celtic race whose 'blind hysterics' Tennyson despised.

It is clear indeed that Tennyson can never be to us what he was to his contemporaries; he was the child of his time, and that time has passed. If his views were circumscribed in certain directions, and his prejudices strong, that is a fault, but a fault we can understand and forgive. His experience was different from ours; it is absurd to blame him for drawing inferences from it other than those we have drawn from ours. He is not, in one sense, a great poet, because he is not a prophet or seer; he has not that universal sympathy which makes a man like Shakespeare appropriate to all times and places. But, in another sense, he is a great poet because he is a great artist, a master of words and metres —a maker of magical music. Let us remember his wonderful lyrics; his vivid pictures of country life; his loving descriptions of flowers and trees, hills and streams; and we shall admit that his poetry is a part of England. At this time, more especially, we shall do well to remember him as the singer of heroic men and deeds and the patient fortitude of unselfish patriotism.

> 'The song that nerves a nation's heart
> Is in itself a deed,'

and the ballad of *The Revenge*, *Riflemen, form*, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, must have been in many minds during the Great War. The *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* sums up all that is finest in the British character, and expresses the ideal that so many followed in obeying the call to 'save or serve' the State in her hour of greatest danger.

When all is said of Tennyson the poet, and Tennyson the man, we shall be hard put to it to find a finer epitaph than that which all ungrudgingly will give him:

> 'He bore without abuse
> The grand old name of gentleman.'

SELECT POEMS

BY

ALFRED TENNYSON

I

OENONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning: but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.
Hither came at noon
Mournful Oenone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:
The grasshopper is silent in the grass:
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the cicala sleeps.
The purple flowers droop: the golden bee
Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves
That house the cold crown'd snake! O mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gather'd shape; for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine:
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft:

Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes
I sat alone: white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's;
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.

'"My own Oenone,
Beautiful-brow'd Oenone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n
'For the most fair,' would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added "This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due:
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Herê comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each

This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods."

'Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon: one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piney sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

'O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom
Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, "from many a vale
And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,
Or labour'd mines undrainable of ore.
Honour," she said, "and homage, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

'O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
"Which in all action is the end of all;
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom—from all neighbour crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss,
In knowledge of their own supremacy."

'Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

'"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for), but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

'Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Again she said: "I woo thee not with gifts.

Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.
Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbiass'd by self-profit, oh! rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom."
'Here she ceased,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O Paris,
Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me not,
Or hearing, would not hear me, woe is me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder: from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

'Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh

Half-whisper'd in his ear, " I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece,"
She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my sight for fear:
But when I look'd Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Here's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

'Yet, mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My dark tall pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Foster'd the callow eaglet—from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Oenone see the morning mist
Sweep thro' them; never see them overlaid
With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her,
The Abominable, that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth,
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child

Ere it is born: her child!—a shudder comes
Across me: never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of Death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire.'

II

SONG

1

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers:
To himself he talks;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
In the walks;
Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the mouldering flowers:
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
An hour before death;
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
And the breath
Of the fading edges of box beneath,
And the year's last rose.
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

III

THE DAY-DREAM

I

THE SLEEPING PALACE

1

The varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains;
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.

The fountain to his place returns
 Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
 On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
 The parrot in his gilded wires.

III

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs:
 In these, in those the life is stay'd.
The mantles from the golden pegs
 Droop sleepily: no sound is made,
Not even of a gnat that sings.
 More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
 That watch the sleepers from the wall.

IV

Here sits the Butler with a flask
 Between his knees, half-drain'd; and there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
 The maid-of-honour blooming fair:
The page has caught her hand in his:
 Her lips are sever'd as to speak:
His own are pouted to a kiss:
 The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V

Till all the hundred summers pass,
 The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass,
 And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.

Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
 Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
 He must have been a jovial king.

VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
 At distance like a little wood;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
 And grapes with bunches red as blood;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
 Close-matted, bur and brake and brier,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
 High up, the topmost palace-spire.

VII

When will the hundred summers die,
 And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
 Bring truth that sways the soul of men?
Here all things in their place remain,
 As all were order'd, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
 And bring the fated fairy Prince.

2

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

I

Year after year unto her feet,
 She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purple coverlet,
 The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,

On either side her tranced form
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl:
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
And moves not on the rounded curl.

II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever; and, amid
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,
Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm
With bracelets of the diamond bright:
Her constant beauty doth inform
Stillness with love, and day with light.

III

She sleeps: her breathings are not heard
In palace chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps: on either hand upswells
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest:
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
A perfect form in perfect rest.

3

THE ARRIVAL

I

All precious things, discover'd late,
To those that seek them issue forth;
For love in sequel works with fate,
And draws the veil from hidden worth.

He travels far from other skies—
His mantle glitters on the rocks—
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
And lighter-footed than the fox.

II

The bodies and the bones of those
That strove in other days to pass,
Are wither'd in the thorny close,
Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.
He gazes on the silent dead:
'They perish'd in their daring deeds.'
This proverb flashes thro' his head,
'The many fail: the one succeeds.'

III

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks:
He breaks the hedge: he enters there:
The colour flies into his cheeks:
He trusts to light on something fair;
For all his life the charm did talk
About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his walk,
And whisper'd voices at his ear.

IV

More close and close his footsteps wind;
The Magic Music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.
His spirit flutters like a lark,
He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.
'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
How dark those hidden eyes must be!'

4

THE REVIVAL

I

A TOUCH, a kiss! the charm was snapt.
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

II

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,
The maid and page renew'd their strife,
The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clackt,
And all the long-pent stream of life
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

III

And last with these the king awoke,
And in his chair himself uprear'd,
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,
'By holy rood, a royal beard!
How say you? we have slept, my lords.
My beard has grown into my lap.'
The barons swore, with many words,
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

IV

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still
My joints are something stiff or so.
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
I mention'd half an hour ago?'
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
In courteous words return'd reply:
But dallied with his golden chain,
And, smiling, put the question by.

5

THE DEPARTURE

I

And on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new world which is the old:
Across the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
And deep into the dying day
The happy princess follow'd him.

II

'I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss';
'O wake for ever, love,' she hears,
'O love, 'twas such as this and this.'
And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

III

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep!'
'O happy sleep, that lightly fled!'
'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!'
'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!'
And o'er them many a flowing range
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

IV

'A hundred summers! can it be?
And whither goest thou, tell me where?'
'O seek my father's court with me,
For there are greater wonders there.'
And o'er the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

IV

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

With one black shadow at its feet,
The house thro' all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines:
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.
But 'Ave Mary,' made she moan,
And 'Ave Mary,' night and morn,
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest brown
To left and right, and made appear,
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear.
And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,
'Madonna, sad is night and morn';
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

Till all the crimson changed, and past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,
Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmur'd she;
Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load.'
And on the liquid mirror glow'd
The clear perfection of her face.
'Is this the form,' she made her moan,
'That won his praises night and morn?'
And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I wake alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn.'

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
But day increased from heat to heat,
On stony drought and steaming salt;
Till now at noon she slept again,
And seem'd knee-deep in mountain grass,
And heard her native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.

She breathed in sleep a lower moan,
And murmuring, as at night and morn,
She thought, 'My spirit is here alone,
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn.'

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:
She felt he was and was not there.
She woke: the babble of the stream
Fell, and, without, the steady glare
Shrank one sick willow sere and small.
The river-bed was dusty-white;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall.
She whisper'd, with a stifled moan
More inward than at night or morn,
'Sweet Mother, let me not here alone
Live forgotten and die forlorn.'

And, rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For 'Love,' they said, 'must needs be true,
To what is loveliest upon earth.'
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say,
'But now thy beauty flows away,
So be alone for evermore.'
'O cruel heart,' she changed her tone,
'And cruel love, whose end is scorn,
Is this the end to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die forlorn?'

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
'But thou shalt be alone no more.'

And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.
'The day to night,' she made her moan,
'The day to night, the night to morn,
And day and night I am left alone
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And lean'd upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
And deepening thro' the silent spheres,
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.
And weeping then she made her moan,
'The night comes on that knows not morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

V

DORA

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,
And often thought 'I'll make them man and wife.'
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearn'd towards William; but the youth, because
He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.
Then there came a day
When Allan call'd his son, and said, 'My son:

I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die:
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter: he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora: take her for your wife;
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,
For many years.' But William answer'd short:
'I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
I will not marry Dora.' Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:
'You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!
But in my time a father's word was law,
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;
Consider, William: take a month to think,
And let me have an answer to my wish;
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
And never more darken my doors again.'
But William answer'd madly; bit his lips,
And broke away. The more he look'd at her
The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
The month was out he left his father's house,
And hired himself to work within the fields;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.
Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd
His niece and said: 'My girl, I love you well;
But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law.'
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,

'It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change!'
And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William; then distresses came on him;
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not:
But Dora stored what little she could save,
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.
Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:
'I have obey'd my uncle until now,
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you:
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest: let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone.'
And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not; for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,
But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound;

And made a little wreath of all the flowers
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said: 'Where were you yesterday?
Whose child is that? What are you doing here?'
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answer'd softly, 'This is William's child!'
'And did I not,' said Allan, 'did I not
Forbid you, Dora?' Dora said again:
'Do with me as you will, but take the child
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!'
And Allan said, 'I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you!
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;
But go you hence, and never see me more.'
So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell
At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,
Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down
And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
And Dora said, 'My uncle took the boy;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you:
He says that he will never see me more.'

Then answer'd Mary, 'This shall never be,
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself:
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
His mother; therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home;
And I will beg of him to take thee back:
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,
And work for William's child, until he grows
Of age to help us.'
So the women kiss'd
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.
The door was off the latch: they peep'd and saw
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,
Like one that loved him: and the lad stretch'd out
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
Then they came in: but when the boy beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her:
And Allan set him down, and Mary said:
'O Father!—if you let me call you so—
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child; but now I come
For Dora: take her back; she loves you well.
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said,
He could not ever rue his marrying me—
I had been a patient wife: but, Sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus:
"God bless him!" he said, "and may he never know
The troubles I have gone thro'!" Then he turn'd
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am!

But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight
His father's memory; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before.'
So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs:—
'I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill'd my son.
I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.
May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children.'
Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times.
And all the man was broken with remorse;
And all his love came back a hundredfold;
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child,
Thinking of William.
So those four abode
Within one house together; and as years
Went forward, Mary took another mate;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

VI

SONGS FROM 'THE PRINCESS'

I

As thro' the land at eve we went
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,

When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

2

THE splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

3

TEARS, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

4

Home they brought her warrior dead:
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:
All her maidens, watching, said,
'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee—
Like summer tempest came her tears—
'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

5

'COME down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or fox-like in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,

Swecter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

VII

THE BEGGAR MAID

Her arms across her breast she laid;
 She was more fair than words can say:
Bare-footed came the beggar maid
 Before the king Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stept down,
 To meet and greet her on her way;
'It is no wonder,' said the lords,
 'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
 She in her poor attire was seen:
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
 One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
 In all that land had never been:
Cophetua sware a royal oath:
 'This beggar maid shall be my queen!'

VIII

FROM 'MAUD'

I

O let the solid ground
 Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
 What some have found so sweet;

Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

II

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me
Before I am quite quite sure
That there is one to love me;
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

2

I

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairily well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute
A miracle of design!

II

What is it? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

III

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will

That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world?

IV

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three-decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand!

IX

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver

Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers, 'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott.'

Part II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.

She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights,
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
'I am half-sick of shadows,' said
The Lady of Shalott.

Part III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,

As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott.

Part IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:

But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott.'

X

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

A FRAGMENT

Like souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.
In crystal vapour everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
And, far in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song:
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong:
Sometimes the sparhawk, wheel'd along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong:
By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.
She seem'd a part of joyous Spring:

A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixt with violet
Her cream-white mule his pastern set:
And fleeter now she skimm'd the plains
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her play'd,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid:
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd
The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips.

XI

MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonnesse about their Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,

Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be.
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'
To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.

A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'
So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'
To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fëalty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,

Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing.
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'
Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:
'And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Someone might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honour and much fame were lost.'
So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,

And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'
To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'
Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.
Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'
And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
'My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'
So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.
But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, 'Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.
 Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.
 Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—

That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

XII

THE LOTOS-EATERS

'COURAGE!' he said, and pointed toward the land,
'This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.'
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,

Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then someone said, 'We will return no more';
And all at once they sang, 'Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam.'

CHORIC SONG

I

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
'There is no joy but calm!'
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life ; ah, why
Should life all labour be ?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last ?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil ? Is there *any* peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change;
For surely now our household hearths are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,

Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd

Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd—down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

XIII

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those

That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this grey spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

XIV

TITHONUS

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.

Me only cruel immortality
Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas! for this grey shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,

Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
'The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.'

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East.
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam

Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground;
Thou seëst all things, thou wilt see my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

XV

THE VOYAGE

I

We left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbour-mouth;
And madly danced our hearts with joy,
As fast we fleeted to the South:
How fresh was every sight and sound
On open main or winding shore!
We knew the merry world was round,
And we might sail for evermore.

II

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail:
The Lady's-head upon the prow
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the gale.
The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,
And swept behind: so quick the run,
We felt the good ship shake and reel,
We seem'd to sail into the Sun!

III

How oft we saw the Sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillar'd light!
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dash'd into the dawn!

IV

New stars all night above the brim
Of waters lighten'd into view;
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving field,
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield;

V

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
High towns on hills were dimly seen,
We past long lines of Northern capes
And dewy Northern meadows green.
We came to warmer waves, and deep
Across the boundless east we drove,
Where those long swells of breaker sweep
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

VI

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
Gloom'd the low coast and quivering brine
With ashy rains, that spreading made
Fantastic plume or sable pine;

By sands and steaming flats, and floods
 Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
 Glow'd for a moment as we past.

VII

O hundred shores of happy climes,
 How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark!
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times
 With wakes of fire we tore the dark;
At times a carven craft would shoot
 From havens hid in fairy bowers,
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,
 But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

VIII

For one fair Vision ever fled
 Down the waste waters day and night,
And still we follow'd where she led,
 In hope to gain upon her flight.
Her face was evermore unseen,
 And fixt upon the far sea-line;
But each man murmur'd 'O my Queen,
 I follow till I make thee mine.'

IX

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd
 Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
 Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst
 Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea,
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
 She bore the blade of Liberty.

x

And only one among us—him
We pleased not—he was seldom pleased:
He saw not far: his eyes were dim:
But ours he swore were all diseased.
'A ship of fools' he shriek'd in spite,
'A ship of fools' he sneer'd and wept.
And overboard one stormy night
He cast his body, and on we swept.

xi

And never sail of ours was furl'd,
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn;
We loved the glories of the world,
But laws of nature were our scorn;
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,
But whence were those that drove the sail
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
And to and thro' the counter-gale?

xii

Again to colder climes we came,
For still we follow'd where she led:
Now mate is blind and captain lame,
And half the crew are sick or dead;
But, blind or lame or sick or sound,
We follow that which flies before:
We know the merry world is round,
And we may sail for evermore.

XVI

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Break, break, break,
On thy cold grey stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

XVII

TO J. S.

The wind, that beats the mountain, blows
More softly round the open wold,
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
Or else I had not dared to flow
In these words toward you, and invade
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,
Those in whose laps our limbs are nursed,
Fall into shadow, soonest lost:
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love
He lends us; but, when love is grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas!
In grief I am not all unlearn'd:
Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass;
One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile—not speak to me
Once more. 'Two years his chair is seen
Empty before us. That was he
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer; for this star
Rose with you thro' a little arc
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother: his mute dust
I honour and his living worth:
A man more pure and bold and just
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,
Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.
Great Nature is more wise than I:
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,
Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,
I will not even preach to you,
'Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain.'

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her will
Be done—to weep or not to weep.

I will not say 'God's ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind';
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
How *should* I soothe you anyway,
Who miss the brother of your youth?
Yet something I did wish to say:

For he too was a friend to me:
Both are my friends, and my true breast
Bleedeth for both; yet it may be
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make
Grief more. 'Twere better I should cease;
Although myself could almost take
The place of him that sleeps in peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace:
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
Nothing comes to thee new or strange.
Sleep full of rest from head to feet;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

XVIII

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

All along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.
All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

XIX

REQUIESCAT

Fair is her cottage in its place,
Where yon broad water sweetly slowly glides.
It sees itself from thatch to base
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to die!
Her quiet dream of life this hour may cease.
Her peaceful being slowly passes by
To some more perfect peace.

XX

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;
For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel 'I am I'?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour and gloom.

Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and Spirit with spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?

XXI

FROM 'IN MEMORIAM'

I

RING out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

2

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

'So careful of the type?' but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death:
The spirit does but mean the breath:
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law—
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

3

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire;
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O, friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

4

Love is and was my Lord and King,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
 Who moves about from place to place,
 And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

5

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
 So far, so near in woe and weal;
 O loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine;
 Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
 Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
 Loved deeplier, darklier understood;
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee.

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
 I hear thee where the waters run;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
 But tho' I seem in star and flower
 To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;
 My love is vaster passion now;
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

XXII

MILTON

Alcaics

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages;
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,
Tower, as the deep-domed empyrĕan
Rings to the roar of an angel onset—
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,

The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
And bloom profuse and cedar arches
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
Where some refulgent sunset of India
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
And crimson-hued the stately palmwoods
Whisper in odorous heights of even.

XXIII

WILL

I

O WELL for him whose will is strong!
He suffers, but he will not suffer long;
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong:
For him nor moves the loud world's random mock,
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,
Who seems a promontory of rock,
That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

II

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,
And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,
Or seeming-genial venial fault,
Recurring and suggesting still!
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
Toiling in immeasurable sand,
And o'er a weary sultry land,
Far beneath a blazing vault,
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

XXIV

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

I

Bury the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.
No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute:

Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good grey head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew!
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

V

All is over and done:
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds:
Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,

Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom:
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame;
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name,
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

VI

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?
Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;

For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea ;
His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;
O give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee ;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun ;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won ;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labour'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamour of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings ;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down ;

A day of onsets of despair !
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away ;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there,
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo !
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine !
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

VII

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers ;
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set

His Briton in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings;
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bad you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever; and whatever tempests lour
For ever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right:
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke;

Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

VIII

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Nor once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he: his work is done,
But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure:

Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory:
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see:
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung:
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain!
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere,
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane:
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true

There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will;
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears:
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears:
The black earth yawns: the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seem'd so great.—
Gone; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him.

XXV

WAGES

Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,
Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—
Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—
Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she:
Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death: if the wages of Virtue be dust,
Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly?
She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky:
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

NOTES

I

Oenone was first published in the volume of 1832 (dated 1833), but was recast for the volume of 1842. There is a valuable comparison of the two versions in Stopford Brooke's study of Tennyson.

Oenone is the first of the classical pieces, and should be compared with the *Lotos-eaters*, *Ulysses*, and *Tithonus*. In this poem Tennyson treats the classic myth in a new way, making it a vehicle of modern ideas in bringing out the symbolic significance of the story. *Oenone* is also a good example of the use of an ideal landscape; that is, a landscape invented by the poet to represent the atmosphere or mood of the poem. For similar 'ideal' landscapes, cf. Shelley's *Alastor* and Browning's *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came*.

Much of the poem was written in the valley of Cauteretz, in the Pyrenees, in 1830, but Tennyson has breathed into the landscape the essential spirit of all mountain valleys; the Pyrenees gave the inspiration, but the description would apply almost equally well to Switzerland and Kashmir.

Oenone was the daughter of a river-god, and Paris was the son of Priam, king of Troy. Because his mother had dreamed that Paris would be the ruin of Troy, he was exposed at birth on the slopes of Mount Ida to perish; but some shepherds found him and brought him up as one of themselves. Here later, as a shepherd, he met and fell in love with Oenone. The poem gives the story of the famous judgement and of the subsequent desertion of Oenone. In *The Death of Oenone* Tennyson returned to the subject.

The classical authority for the story of Oenone and Paris is the Athenian Apollodorus (2nd century B.C.), who wrote a chronicle of events beginning with the fall of Troy. Tennyson makes of the story an allegory of the choice of ideals in life which every man, at some time, has to make.

1. *Ida.* The whole range of mountains south of Troy, of which Mount Gargarus is one of the highest summits.

2. *Ionian.* Ionia is the region south of Ida, now part of Asia Minor.

6. *meadow-ledges.* The 'hanging valleys' of geology.

11. *takes the morning.* Cf. *The Voice and the Peak*:

> 'The Peak is high and flush'd
> At his highest with sunrise fire.'

13. *Troas*, the district of which Troy, with its citadel, Ilion, is the capital or 'crown.'

22. *many-fountain'd*, because several rivers, e.g. Simois and Scamander, have their source upon these mountains.

These two lines form the 'refrain' of the poem, and this use of the 'refrain' reminds one of the *Idylls* of Theocritus and the *Eclogues* of Virgil, with which Tennyson was well acquainted.

27. *and the cicala sleeps.* Changed afterwards to 'and the winds are dead,' partly for the sake of the sound, and partly because Tennyson was not sure if the cicala would be asleep at noon-tide. The alteration is significant of his methods.

39. *as yonder walls*, &c. This refers to the legend that the walls of Troy rose into their place of themselves at the sound of Apollo's lyre. Cf. *Tithonus*:

> 'Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
> While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.'

41. *it may be*, &c. Cf. Tennyson's motive in writing *In Memoriam*:

> 'To lull with song an aching heart.'

60. *foam-bow*, formed by the sun striking through the foam of the cataract.

65. *Hesperian*, i.e. such as grew in the gardens of the Hesperides in the western ocean, according to the Greek myth. Cf. Hawthorne's *Wonder Book* for the tale of 'The Three Golden Apples.'

66. *ambrosially.* Ambrosia was the food of the gods. Cf. 'amrita' in Indian literature.

72. *Oread.* A daughter of the mountains.

74. *married brows.* The Greeks admired eyebrows that met across the forehead. Tennyson refers to Theocritus in his note on this epithet.

79. *Peleus*, i.e. on the occasion of his marriage with Thetis, the sea-nymph.

81. *Iris*. The messenger of the gods, identified with the rainbow.

83–4. *Herè, Pallas, and Aphroditè*. Herè, the wife of Zeus, the chief of the heaven-dwellers; Pallas Athenè, goddess of wisdom and learning; Aphroditè, the goddess of love and sensual delights. Tennyson makes each allegorically represent the ideals of life. Herè stands for the love of selfish power; Pallas for the subordination to law; Aphroditè for the supremacy of the senses. In the *Lotos-eaters* the ideal of Aphroditè is worked out more fully; in the *Palace of Art*, that of Herè; in *Ulysses* the appeal of Pallas is followed.

The point made in *Oenone* is that the choice of Paris to follow capricious desire, or Aphroditè, brings about all the subsequent confusion and sorrow.

95. *amaracus*. Tennyson tells us he means by this 'marjoram,' an aromatic herb.

95. *asphodel*, not the mountain plant so common on the Welsh moors, but the mythical lily that grew in the meadows of Elysium, the abode of the blessed dead. Cf. *Lotos-eaters*:

> 'Others in Elysian valleys dwell,
> Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.'

102. *peacock*, sacred to Herè; the cloud is also an indication of the divine presence in Homer. (*Iliad*, xiv. 350, where the flowers on Mount Ida are also described, and Zeus and Herè 'sat upon a cloud, beautiful and golden, and sparkling dew fell from it.')

The whole poem is full of Homeric reminiscences.

111. *state*, the pomp of wealth and position.

129. *quiet seats*, a favourite phrase of Tennyson's, taken from Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*, iii. 18. Cf. *Wages*, 'no quiet seats of the just.'

137. *o'erthwarted*, crossed.

142. *self-reverence*, &c. These lines give the key-note of Tennyson's 'criticism of life.' He embodied the ideal in his *King Arthur*.

151. *sequel of guerdon*, i.e. reward to follow.

163. *Circled*, full-orbed.

170, 171. *Idalian, Paphian*. Idalium and Paphos, in the island of Cyprus, were the homes of the worship of Aphroditè, who, accordingly, has the names of 'Cypris' and 'Cypria.'

171. *fresh as the foam.* Her name Aphroditê means 'born of the foam.'

204. *They cut away,* i.e. the companions of Paris who built of these pines the ships for his fatal expedition to Greece. Cf. the chorus in Euripides, *Hecuba,* 630.

220. *The Abominable.* This refers to Eris, the goddess of strife, who brought the apple to the marriage-feast of Peleus.

259. *Cassandra,* the daughter of Priam, who had the gift of prophecy, but was fated never to be believed.

Paris sailed to Greece, was entertained by the King of Sparta, fell in love with his wife Helen, and took her away to Troy. The Greeks, for this reason, attacked Troy, which fell after a siege of ten years. Paris, wounded by a poisoned arrow, escaped to Mount Ida to seek Oenone, who was reputed to possess an antidote for the poison. She refused to give it, but afterwards repented of her refusal and killed herself. Cf. *Death of Oenone.*

II

Published in 1830. This song was a favourite with FitzGerald. It was written in the garden at Somersby.

III

As, in *Oenone,* Tennyson takes a classical story and adapts it to modern times by giving it an allegorical meaning, so here he tells over again an old fairy story familiar to all children, and suggests in it the awakening power of love: 'a costly kiss the prelude to some brighter world.' *The Sleeping Beauty* appeared in 1830, the rest of the poem in 1842. We have omitted the Prologue, Moral, Envoi, and Epilogue, which give, as FitzGerald says, 'an excuse for telling an old-world tale,' and which were composed separately.

The story is Teutonic in origin, and may be found in Grimm's collection.

17. *roof-haunting martins.* Shakespeare's 'temple-haunting martlet' (*Macbeth,* I.).

34. *Oriel.* The large window of the recess of the banquet-hall.

132. *holy rood,* the cross.

137. *Pardy,* the Anglicized form of the French oath *par dieu*—by God.

143. *golden chain*, the sign of his office. Cf. Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*.

148. *new world*. Because love has come into it.

166. *crescent-bark*, of the new moon, which rides like a ship in the sky.

IV

First published in the 1832 volume as a variation on his former poem *Mariana in the Moated Grange*, founded on the story of the forsaken Mariana in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. The landscape is intended to bring out, by its harmony with her mood, the weariness and loneliness of the abandoned Mariana. It was suggested by the scenery of the country between Narbonne and Perpignan which Tennyson saw on his visit to the south of France with Hallam in 1831. Sir Alfred Lyall says of this poem, especially of the 5th stanza, 'To those who have been besieged and cooped up for many hours by the fierce sun beating against the walls of some dismal place of shelter, these lines will vividly recall a familiar sensation.'

9. *Ave Mary*, 'Hail, Mary,' the prayer to the virgin Mother of Christ, the protector of all lone women.

31. *liquid mirror*. Clear mirror.

90. *Hesper*, the evening star, 'the Bringer home of all good things.'

V

Dora was first published in 1842. The story was partly taken from Miss Mitford's *Dora Cresswell*.

This poem is a good example of Tennyson's treatment of modern life. He is here using an enduring subject of poetry, 'the heart of man, and human life' as lived by ordinary men and women. His predecessors in this style of poetry were Burns, Crabbe, and Wordsworth. In *Dora* he is nearer to Wordsworth than in any other poem of his; but the difference between them may be seen by comparing *Dora* with *Michael*; the former is more concise and the 'art' of its simplicity is more apparent. The new turn which Tennyson gave to this kind of poetry may be better discerned in *Walking to the Mail* and *Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue*. Later he used the dramatic form for this kind of subject, as in *The Northern Farmer, The Northern Cobbler*, and the less successful *Spinster's Sweet-arts*.

VI

The Princess : a Medley, was published in 1847. Tennyson saw clearly that one of the problems of the near future was the higher education of women, and the *Princess* was written to point out the danger, in that education, of treating woman as ' undevelopt man ' instead of ' diverse ' :

> ' Could we make her as the man,
> Sweet love were slain : his dearest bond is this,
> Not like to like, but like in difference.'

The College of Princess Ida and her scheme of woman's work from which man is excluded come to nothing, and in the end—

> ' Love in the sacred halls
> Held carnival at will.'

The *Princess* consists of a Prologue introducing the story, the story itself in seven cantos—a kind of mock-epic—and a conclusion. The songs were inserted in 1850 to link together the parts of the poem. They contain some of Tennyson's best lyrics, and as such we may read them here without considering their bearing upon the story of the *Princess*.

The ' bugle ' song (2) was written after Tennyson's visit to Killarney, in the south of Ireland, in 1848, where he had a bugle blown beneath the crags and heard the echoes answering ' from cliff and scar,' so that they sounded like ' the horns of Elfland ' blown by fairies.

Tears, idle Tears (3) was composed on an autumn visit to Tintern Abbey, the scene of Wordsworth's well-known poem. Tennyson calls it a blank-verse lyric, and says that it gives ' the sense of the abiding in the transient.' That description would apply also to Wordsworth's ' Lines,' and one may note, in this connexion, the difference between the two poets. In Wordsworth's poem the thought becomes metaphysical; in Tennyson's ' the sense of the abiding in the transient ' is suggested by concrete images.

Home they brought her warrior dead brings out very finely the one source of consolation in bereavement, the need that others have of our love, and the necessity of doing our work for the living. It was this thought that inspired *Ulysses* in the time of Tennyson's great sorrow.

Come down, O maid, is described as an ' Idyl,' and was written in Switzerland, whence the scenery is taken. Tennyson regarded it, his son tells us, ' as among his most successful

work.' It emphasizes the need of human nature to keep close to the human, and not to lose itself in dreams of the ideal, for one must live in the valley, though one visits the height. The same idea is wrought out more fully and allegorically in the *Idylls of the King*, especially in *The Holy Grail*.

81. *Death and Morning* refers to the lifeless silence of dawn upon the great snow mountains—the ' silver horns ' or peaks.

83. *firths of ice*, the glaciers and ice-fields. The ' séracs ' and crevasses of an Alpine glacier are well described in the next line, ' furrow-cloven falls,' while ' huddling ' gives just the right idea of compression, which does, in fact, cause this unevenness in the flow of the ice. Tennyson explains ' dusky doors ' as follows : ' The opening of the gorge is called dusky as a contrast with the snows all about.' But surely this is an instance of forgetfulness ; I cannot but think that it was not the ' gorge,' but the glacier ' snout,' which originally suggested the phrase ; for the glacier snout from which the torrent issues is, in most cases, certainly ' dusky ' with mud and debris, and in strong contrast with the purity of the surface higher up and the snows all about.

90. *dangling water-smoke*. Cf. *Lotos-eaters* (XII.) :

> ' Some, like a downward smoke,
> Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go.'

93. *azure pillars*. The blue smoke curling up like a pillar from the cottage chimney.

98. *The moan of doves*, &c. These two lines are, perhaps, the best example in English poetry of language representing the actual sound, and calling up at the same time the associations of the sound—onomatopoeia.

VII

The Beggar Maid. Published in 1842. The ballad of *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid* was a favourite of Shakespeare, who refers to it in *Love's Labour's Lost*, I. ii. 15 ; IV. i. 66 ; *Romeo and Juliet*, II. i. 17 ; *Richard II*, V. iii. 80 ; and 2 *Henry IV*, V. iii. 103. The earliest known version is contained in Richard Johnson's *Garland of Golden Roses : gathered out of England's Royall Garden* (1612), where it is called *A Song of a King and a Beggar*.

VIII

Maud. These stanzas are taken from *Maud: a Monodrama*, published in 1855. *Maud* was really an expanded dramatic monologue ' such as *Locksley Hall*, and was intended to be ' a kind of *Hamlet*,' the self-revelation of a sick soul. The speaker is a lover, and the course of his love does not run smooth. Naturally prone to melancholy and cynicism, he becomes the slave of his feelings, and falls into actual madness, from which he is saved at the end by the crisis of the Crimean War, when he exclaims :

> ' It is better to fight for the good, than to rail at the ill ;
> I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
> I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.'

The scheme of the poem was novel. ' The peculiarity of *Maud*,' said Tennyson, ' is that different phases of passions in one person take the place of different characters ' ; but we may, perhaps, find a predecessor in Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. The hero is, indeed, somewhat Byronic, and indulges rather too much in rhetoric and invective. Andrew Lang found his prototype in the Master of Ravenswood (Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor*), and expresses the ground of most of the critical dissatisfaction by saying that ' the hero is an unwholesome young man, and not of an original kind.' To this it might be retorted that Tennyson intended him to be ' unwholesome ' ; he calls him, in fact, ' an egotist with the makings of a cynic.'

Apart from the subject matter of the poem, there can be no doubt about the technical merits of the poetry. Lyrical power and metrical skill are at their height in it, and Jowett's statement is still true that ' no modern poem contains more lines that ring in the ears of men.'

IX

First published in the 1833 volume and much altered for the 1842 edition. Andrew Lang makes a useful comparison of the two versions.

Tennyson tells us that he took the story from an Italian novelette, *Donna di Scalotta*. He had not then heard, he thinks, of the ' lily-maid of Astolat,' Elaine, who is really the same as the Lady of Shalott. For his later treatment,

where the mystery is taken away and the story humanized, read *Lancelot and Elaine* in the *Idylls*.

The poem is a pretty piece of mediaevalism, as mediaevalism was conceived by the nineteenth century. The lady under the mysterious curse is like Coleridge's *Christabel*, or a figure in a Pre-Raphaelite picture. Tennyson gave, as an interpretation of the story: 'The new-born love for something, for someone in the wide world from which she has been so long secluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of reality.' She is awakened as the Princess in the *Day-Dream* is awakened, but not to happiness; her love is hopeless, and she comes out of the shadows only to die. It is love that brings the soul to life, but it may kill the body at the same time.

In this and the next poem we see how Tennyson might have treated the Arthurian legends lyrically, with more success, as thought FitzGerald—and many will agree with him—than he attained in the epic form.

10. *willows whiten*. The wind stirs the willows, so that the white underpart of the leaf is shown.

14. *Camelot*. This town is on the sea, says Tennyson, in the Italian story. In the Celtic legend it was the city of Arthur, the home of the Round Table. It is described in *Gareth and Lynette*.

56. *pad*, a horse for use on 'paths.' We should say now a 'hack.' Cf. Collins's *To-morrow*:

> 'With an ambling pad-pony to pace o'er the lawn.'

71. *I am half-sick of shadows*. Notice the reason: it is the sight of the lovers that makes her discontented.

78. *red-cross knight*. This is the device on his shield. The red cross was originally the badge of the Crusaders.

85. *The bridle bells*. Cf. Chaucer's description of the monk (*Canterbury Tales*, Prologue, 169):

> 'And, when he rood, men might his brydel here
> Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere,
> And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle.'

84. *Galaxy*. The stars of the Milky Way.

87. *baldric*, or belt. Cf. Chaucer's Yeoman:

> 'An horn he bare, the bawdrick was of grene.'

98. *bearded*. An English version of the Greek word 'comet'—long-haired.

107. *'Tirra lirra.'* He carols like Shakespeare's lark in the *Winter's Tale.*

For a prose comparison with these mediaeval lyrics of Tennyson's, read *Golden Wings* and *The Hollow Land*, among the prose romances of William Morris written some twenty to thirty years later (1886). It was Tennyson who started the fashion of this kind of romantic mediaevalism, which is quite different from Scott's.

X

Published in 1842, but probably written ten years earlier at Cambridge.

This delightful little lyric is a simple idyll of the spring and love. In the *Coming of Arthur*, Lancelot is sent to bring Arthur's bride, Guinevere, from the court of old Leodogran, her father.

> 'Then Arthur charged his warrior whom he loved
> And honour'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride forth
> And bring the queen; and watch'd him from the gates:
> And Lancelot passed away among the flowers
> (For then was later April), and return'd
> Among the flowers, in May, with Guinevere.'

For beauty of rhythm and the 'lilt' of its lines this fragment may be compared with another, the *Kubla Khan* of Coleridge (cf., e.g.:

> 'Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
> Through caverns measureless to man,
> Down to a sunless sea.')

while it has found a worthy successor in the work of Swinburne, who learned much of his magic from Tennyson.

12. *sparhawk*, or sparrow-hawk.

33. *she whose elfin prancer.* Queen Mab, or Titania, and her fairy hunters. Cf. *Princess*:

> 'The horns of Elfland faintly blowing';

but perhaps the reference is to the night-riders of Celtic legends.

XI

Written in 1835, published 1842.

'I always associate that Arthur idyll with Bassenthwaite

Lake, under Skiddaw,' says FitzGerald, in 1881, referring to the May of 1835, when he and Tennyson stayed with Spedding at his Cumberland home, and sat up at night 'conning over the *Morte d'Arthur, Lord of Burleigh*, and other things which helped to make up the two volumes of 1842' (FitzGerald's *Letters*, vol. iv.). It was from this poem that Tennyson afterwards developed the *Idylls of the King*, but it can be read apart from them and gains by the isolation.

Tennyson had been, from his boyhood, attracted by the legend of Arthur. Milton's intention to write an epic on the subject probably influenced him. The first essays were *The Lady of Shalott* and *Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere*, followed by *Sir Galahad* and the *Morte d'Arthur*. About 1833 he wrote a sketch in prose, and a scheme for treating the legend allegorically, but seems to have been undetermined whether to write an epic or a play. In 1855 the form was decided upon, and the first four idylls, *Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine*, and *Guinevere*, appeared in 1859, but the cycle was not completed till 1872. With the *Idylls* as a whole we are not here concerned, and can safely set aside the vexed question of the allegory which runs through them. The *Morte d'Arthur* is a noble epical fragment, an adaptation of Homer such as Matthew Arnold attempted later on a more ambitious scale in *Sohrab and Rustum*.

English literature is full of the Arthurian legend. Of the historical Arthur much is affirmed, little agreed upon. Tennyson believed that 'he lived about 500 A.D., and defeated his enemies in a pitched battle in the Welsh kingdom of Strathclyde.' The *Morte d'Arthur* tells of what happened after the last fight of all against the traitor Mordred, who, according to some legends, was Arthur's son. These legends of Arthur are found in the early Welsh, French, and German tales and romances and in some later chronicles, such as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Britons*, in the first half of the twelfth century. A new tendency was given to them by Walter de Mapes, at the end of the same century, who introduces the Holy Grail and makes Arthur a Christian hero. In the fifteenth century Sir Thomas Malory collected these legends from various sources—he specifies the Welsh, French, and English—in his 'noble and joyous book,' the *Morte Darthur*, printed by Caxton in 1485.

This book of Malory's has proved a mine of poetical material for the English poets, and it was this book that Tennyson used more than any other for his *Idylls*. Practically his only

other source was the *Mabinogion*—the collection of the 'Welsh,' i.e. Cymric and Brythonic legends—which he read in the translation made by Lady Charlotte Guest from the MS. in the library of Jesus College, Oxford. Taking the language of Malory as his model and transforming the story by his own imagination, he has produced a poem which is essentially romantic, but which is certainly not Celtic in spirit nor Homeric in form, though Landor seems to have thought it was.

In Spenser's *Faerie Queene* Arthur appears allegorically as the virtue of 'magnificence.' Milton gave up his idea of making Arthur the hero of a national epic, and turned to *Paradise Lost* instead. Dryden thought of 'raising the Table Round again,' as Scott says, but produced only a poor play with the title *King Arthur*; while Scott himself, though attracted by the legends, hardly touched them himself.

It may be added that Lady Charlotte Guest's translation was not published till 1838, so that for the *Morte d'Arthur* Malory alone may be called the source.

For the story in Malory consult the edition of the *Morte* published in the Temple Classics (Dent), vol. iv, book xxi, chapters iv and v.

3. *table*, i.e. the knights of the order of the Round Table.

4. *Lyonnesse*, the land which, legend says, lies now under the sea, south of Cornwall.

14. *sequel*, i.e. the result of this day's fighting.

27. *Excalibur*. 'The name of it, said the lady' (of the Lake) 'is Excalibur, that is as much to say as Cut-steel.' (Malory, ii. 3.) (Vol. i in Temple Classics.)

70. *I heard the ripple*. In Malory he says simply, 'I saw nothing but waves and winds,' and the second time, 'I saw nothing but the waters wappe and waves wanne.'

80. *lief*, beloved.

125. *offices*, used in the Latin and Elizabethan sense of 'services' or 'duties.'

139. *like a streamer*, &c. A reference to the Aurora Borealis—the 'northern morn.'

140. *moving isles of winter*, icebergs.

185. *His own thought*, i.e. his fear that 'the wound had taken cold' through his own delay in carrying out the King's order.

215. *greaves*, the leg armour.

215. *cuisses*, the thigh armour.

218. *dais-throne*, i.e. the poop of the barge.

232 *the light that led* Cf *Gospel of St Matthew*, II 1–12.

243 *Comfort thyself*, &c Cf. Malory, 'Comfort thyself, said the king, 'and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in, for I will into the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound. and if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul'

259 *Avilion*, the legendary name of Glastonbury. But here it stands for an Isle of the Blest, a traditional island of the dead The description of it corresponds with Homer's description of Elysium (*Odyssey*, IV, 566.)

XII

First published in the edition of 1833.

In this poem, as in *Oenone*, Tennyson takes a classical story and adapts it to represent a mood of the modern mind—the tendency to lose in dreaming all touch with the actualities of life Those who surrender themselves to this mood become callous, in the end, to the sufferings of humanity, like the Epicurean gods The attitude of mind towards life here is the exact antithesis of that in *Ulysses*, it is the same as that in *The Palace of Art*, and the results it produces are seen in *The Vision of Sin* That Tennyson made the effect at which he aimed may be seen in Charles Kingsley's apt use of the poem in his novel *Alton Locke*, where he describes the reception by the House of Commons of the 'monster petition' of the Chartists, in April 1848, 'amid roars of laughter—"inextinguishable laughter" as of Tennyson's Epicurean gods,' and goes on to quote the final lines of the poem, 'careless of mankind,' &c, adding at the end of his quotation 'Truly, truly, great poets' words are vaster than the singers themselves suppose'

In this poem, as in *Oenone*, Tennyson constructs an ideal landscape, it is a dream-land fit for the dreaming Lotos-eaters, though details of the scenery are taken from things seen in the Pyrenees. The sensuous images are deliberately chosen to subdue

> 'Our hearts and spirits wholly
> To the influence of mild-minded melancholy,'

and the sound of the lines is in tune with the mood.

The classical suggestion for the poem may be found in Homer, *Odyssey*, IX, 83 foll Odysseus (or Ulysses), on his way home from Troy to Ithaca, tries to round Malea, but is

driven south by a north wind till he reaches the coast of Libya, or northern Africa, and comes to the land of the Lotos-eaters. The people are friendly and give his men the lotos to eat; 'and whoever ate the honey-sweet fruit of the lotos was no longer willing to take back word, nor to go, but desired there to abide eating the lotos with the lotos-eaters, and forget his return to his native land.'

Herodotus, the Athenian traveller, says of the Lotos-eaters, that they occupy the coast in a portion of Libya, which we now call Tripoli; 'they subsist only on the fruit of the lotos; and the fruit of the lotos is equal in size to the mastic berry, and in sweetness it resembles the fruit of the palm. The Lotos-eaters make wine also from this fruit.'

It need hardly be added that the lotos was nothing like the Indian flower! Tennyson's lotos may be classified, if we want to classify it, with his ambrosia and asphodel, among the flora of Utopia.

1. *He.* Ulysses.

10. *downward smoke.* These descriptions of the waterfalls were made on the visit to the Pyrenees. It was his practice, he tells us, to sketch out on the spot, in a few words, any scene which pleased him. Wordsworth's method of 'recollections' may be contrasted with this.

18. *up-clomb*, archaic form of the past tense. Note how the line would be weakened if 'climbed' were substituted.

23. *galingale.* Tennyson tells us that he meant the 'Cyperus papyrus' of Linnaeus.

68. *no joy but calm.* Ataraxia, or 'undisturbedness,' rather than pleasure, was the highest good, according to Epicurean philosophy

88. *Time driveth onward fast.* Tennyson was fond of Marvell and his lines:

> 'But at my back I always hear
> Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near.'

124. *Is there confusion*, &c. The 'little isle' is, of course, Ithaca; but, as we read, our thoughts turn to England and those who fear to make 'confusion worse confounded' by attempting to reform social conditions.

133. *amaranth and moly*, both legendary. Moly was a charm against magic in Homer. Cf. Milton, *Comus*, 636:

> 'That moly
> That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave.'

142. *acanthus*, the plant that figures in Greek architecture as often as the lotos in Indian.

155. *careless of mankind*. The gods are thus described by Lucretius in his poem *De Rerum Natura* (On the Nature of Things), iii. 18 foll. and v, 83.

XIII

First published in 1842.

This poem is again an adaptation of a classical story to embody a modern ideal. The mood is in contrast with that of the *The Lotos-eaters*. It was written soon after Hallam's death, and it gives, says Tennyson, 'the feeling about the need of going forward and braving the struggle of life perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*.' It carried a particular appeal to his contemporaries at a time when the political future seemed full of danger, and in religion men's minds were overcast with doubt. It expresses, as *The Voyage* too expresses, that spirit of adventure which urges men on to attempt something new, whether in the physical or the intellectual worlds. Tennyson's Ulysses may be compared with Marlowe's Tamburlaine:

> 'Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
> And always moving as the restless spheres
> Will us to wear ourselves and never rest.'

Comparing *Ulysses* with earlier classical poems, like *Oenone* and *The Lotos-eaters*, we may perceive the truth of Spedding's remarks upon the change in the poetry of the 1842 volume: 'Moral and spiritual traits of character are more dwelt upon in place of external scenery and circumstance. He addresses himself more to the heart and less to the ear and eye.'

In a passage of Homer's *Odyssey* (xi. 120), the ghost of the prophet Teiresias tells Ulysses that he will die in a strange land on a last voyage from Ithaca. The poet Eugammon (about 568 B.C.), acting on this hint, relates the story at length in his *Telegoneia*, where Ulysses is killed by his own son Telegonus, who does not recognize him. In this form the story came down to Dante, who, living in an age of exploration, inserted in his vision of Hell (xxvi. 76–113) the story of the death of Ulysses. The flame, which is Ulysses, tells Dante that when he quitted Circe 'neither my fondness for my son, nor my aged sire's distress, nor the affection due which should have rejoiced Penelope's heart, availed to

overpower within me my eagerness to win experience of the world, and of the virtues and vices of mankind ; but I started on the expanse of the deep sea with a single vessel, and with that small company who had not deserted me. . . . I and my companions were old and weary when we reached the narrow strait where Hercules set up his boundary-marks, to the end that no man should proceed beyond. On my right hand I left Seville behind, and on the opposite side Ceuta had already receded from my view. "O brothers," I cried, "ye who through dangers innumerable have reached the west, grudge not to the too-brief waking-time of our senses which still remains, to win, by following in the sun's wake, the knowledge of the uninhabited world. Bethink ye of your origin ; ye were not created to live the life of brutes, but to pursue virtue and intelligence." By this brief address I made my companions so eager for the voyage that hardly after that could I have restrained them.' They sail on till they sight a new land, when a whirlwind arises and smites their ship. 'Thrice, with a rush of waters, it whirled it round ; at the fourth onset the stern was raised on high and the prow sank beneath, as a Higher Power willed, until the sea closed over us.' (Trans. by Tozer, Clarendon Press.)

Tennyson, it will be observed, transfers this speech to the beginning of the voyage, but preserves the spirit of Dante's 'Ulysses,' visualizing, as was his wont, the scene of the departure, which is in harmony with the mood of the speaker —the long day wanes and the deep calls ; it is the end of day and the end of life is near.

4. *unequal laws*. No one knows better than the law-giver the inequity of human laws, however carefully administered. Cf. *Rizpah* :

> 'I came into court to the Judge and the lawyers. I told them my tale,
> God's own truth—but they kill'd him, they kill'd him for robbing the mail.'

10. *rainy Hyades*, so-called in Virgil, *Aen.* I. 777, 'pluviusque Hyades.' The word 'Hyades' is Greek, and was the name given to the constellation whose morning rising in May ushered in the rainy season—the 'rainy ones.'

13. *much have I seen*, 'much-experienced' is Tennyson's translation of the usual Homeric epithet for Ulysses.

19. *all experience*, &c., i.e. the more we know, the more aware we are of the immense amount of the unknown.

27. *eternal silence.* Cf. Wordsworth:

> 'Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal silence.'

45. *dark broad seas.* Homer's epithet for the sea is 'wine-dark.'

53. *strove with Gods.* In the battles on the plain before Troy the gods sometimes mingled in the fighting, and Ares (or Mars) was actually wounded by the Greek Diomedes.

58. *sitting well in order,* &c. An English version of a line often occurring in Homer.

60. *baths.* Homer speaks of the 'baths of ocean.' Ocean was the river surrounding the world.

63. *Happy Isles,* the fabulous islands of the blest, supposed to lie somewhere beyond the Pillars of Hercules, i.e. straits of Gibraltar. Here were the gardens of the Hesperides. Cf. *Oenone.*

69. *strong in will.* Ulysses embodies the ideal proposed by Pallas in *Oenone.*

XIV

Tithonus was written about the same time as *Ulysses* (1833–35), to which it is a kind of 'pendant, but was not published till 1860, when Thackeray asked Tennyson for a poem for his *Cornhill Magazine.* The story of Tithonus is told in one of the Homeric hymns, and Virgil mentions him several times, e.g. *Georgics,* i. 445:

> 'Ubi pallida surget
> Tithoni croceum linquens Aurora cubile.'

i.e. 'when the Dawn rises pale, leaving the saffron bed of Tithonus.' Aurora (the Greek Eos, the goddess of dawn) gave to her lover Tithonus immortality, but did not give him therewith eternal youth. As the *gift of the gods* could not be recalled, Tithonus was in mercy transformed into a grasshopper. The keynote of the poem is struck in the lines:

> 'Why should a man desire in any way
> To vary from the kindly race of men,
> Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
> Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?'

As in the *Holy Grail* in one way, and in *Maud* in another,

Tennyson is here expressing the danger of abnormality, of the desire to be ' not as other men are.'

It is the message of *Faust* over again. *Tithonus* is, perhaps, the most ' classical ' in treatment of all Tennyson's classical poems. Comparing it with *Oenone* and the *Lotos-eaters*, we may perceive the greater simplicity and purity of diction and feeling.

25. *the silver star.* Cf. Thomson, *The Seasons :* Summer, l. 1694 :

> ' Where, leading soft
> The silent hours of love, with purest ray
> Sweet Venus shines ; and from her genial rise,
> When daylight sickens till it springs afresh,
> Unrivalled reigns, the fairest lamp of night.'

47. *a saying,* &c. Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics,* vi. 2–6) quotes the poet Agathon : ' There is one thing that even a god lacks—to undo what has been done.'

63. *Ilion,* &c. Cf. *Oenone* :

> ' As yonder walls
> Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed.'

71. *grassy barrows.* Cf. *Lotos-eaters* :

> ' Heap'd over with a mound of grass.'

XV

Published in 1864. The *Voyage* should be read with *Ulysses* and with *Merlin and the Gleam.* Life is a voyage of adventure in quest of the ideal. The ideal may be ethical, intellectual, artistic; but, in whatever shape it appears to us, it is ever unattainable. The pursuit of it seems, therefore, to some a folly (cf. verse x), but, indeed, ' to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is, to labour.' R. L. Stevenson's ' El Dorado ' in *Virginibus Puerisque* expresses perfectly the mood of the poem.

Two points may be noted ; this is one of the few poems in which Tennyson takes us away from the shore and attempts a sea-scape, and it is significant that he goes to the tropics—' the nutmeg rocks and isles of clove '—which he was often wishing to visit, but never did, except in such dreams as this. Even his ideal landscapes were careful composite pictures of what he had seen ; here he gets away from personal ob-

servation altogether, and his sea reminds us of the sea in Coleridge, though there is nothing to equal the 'witch's oils' and the water-snakes of the *Ancient Mariner*. The second thing noteworthy in the poem is its gaiety, an uncommon quality in Tennyson, on the whole. These followers of the fair vision are jolly, reckless fellows; they love the glories of the world, and they scorn the laws of nature, even as the Elizabethan seamen scorned them. The gravity of Ulysses and the solemnity of Merlin are laid aside; here the mood is lighter, and life seems an adventure to be entered on with courage and endurance, certainly, but also with gaiety and a touch of dare-devilry.

It is well to remember that Tennyson and his friend Hallam once went off to Spain to join in an insurrection. 'No further information upon this business has been preserved,' notes his son in the *Memoir*. It is a pity, for the incident gives us a glimpse of an aspect of Tennyson which is apt to be obscured by memoirs and commentaries.

11. *The Lady's-head*, the figure-head, a picturesque feature of the old sailing ships, which does not appear on the modern steamer.

27. *the rim*, of the horizon.

31. *silver boss*. The moon is the centre, the halo round it the edge, the sky between 'the dusky shield.'

40. *nutmeg rocks*, &c., as, for example, the Molucca islands. Cf. *To Ulysses* (a later poem to W. G. Palgrave):

> 'Yon Oriental Eden-isles,
> Where man, nor only Nature smiles.'

41. *peaks that flamed*. Some of these volcanoes appear to be pouring forth flame, others smoke and ashes. This is appearance only, for the 'smoke' is steam, and the 'flames' are but the reflection on the steam-clouds from the molten lava pouring from the crater.

45–6. *floods of mighty mouth*. The great rivers.

51. *sea burn'd*. The phosphorescence is seen sometimes on the whole surface, sometimes only in the water from the stern.

57. *fair Vision*. The ideal which is imagined in various shapes, according to the varieties of imagination among men.

71. *bloodless point*, &c., i.e. Liberty without bloodshed; the sword is reversed, in token that it will not be used for offence. Tennyson hated 'the red fool-fury of the Seine.'

73. *only one*. This is the cynic, the pseudo-wise man who

has no 'illusions'; ideals to him are foolishness, and enthusiasms the crudity of youth.

77. *a ship of fools.* This reminds us of Barclay's satire, *The Ship of Fools* (1509).

84. *laws of nature were our scorn.* The reason for this 'scorn' appears in the next four lines; natural conditions may be adverse but man can persevere and turn them ultimately to serve his purpose. There is more than this implied: these laws have no power of themselves; there is a greater Cause in the universe, and to this Cause man feels himself akin through his possession of will. Cf. Pascal: 'Man is the feeblest reed in existence, but he is a thinking reed. There is no necessity that the universe be armed for his destruction; a noxious vapour, a drop of water, is enough to cause his death. But though the universe were to destroy him, man would be more noble than his destroyer, for he would know that he was dying, while the universe would know nothing of its own achievement.'

Cf. also Huxley: 'There lies within man a fund of energy, operating intelligently, and, so far akin to that which pervades the universe, that it is competent to influence and to modify the cosmic process.'

87. *whirlwind's heart.* At the centre of the cyclonic storm is calm.

88. *counter-gale* may mean the 'anti-cyclone, but probably Tennyson is merely thinking of men tacking 'to and thro' an unfavourable wind. The question 'whence were those?' implies that the men who 'drove the sail' and fought with the storm, are *in* the material universe but not *of* it. Man is but the foster-child of Earth, as Wordsworth calls him:

> 'The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar.'

XVI

First published in 1842. Whether considered as lyric or as elegy this poem may be called perfect.

XVII

First published in the 1833 edition.

This poem is addressed to James Spedding on the death of his brother, Edward. It anticipates, in some ways, the

attempts of Tennyson to console himself, to ' dull the inward pain,' in *In Memoriam*.

James Spedding was at Cambridge with Tennyson and FitzGerald, and was extraordinarily beloved and respected by all who knew him. His life was spent in the editing of Bacon and other literary work, and his letters and reviews are full of sound criticism and advice on contemporary literature. He died in 1881. FitzGerald wrote of him: ' He was the wisest man I have known : not the less so for plenty of the boy in him ; a great sense of humour, a Socrates in Life and Death.' Carlyle calls him, ' The indefatigable, patient, placidly invincible, and victorious Spedding.'

19. *Once thro' mine own doors.* This refers to the death of his father at Somersby in 1831.

45. *God's ordinance.* Cf. *Tithonus* : ' the goal of ordinance ' ; and cf. *In Memoriam* (VI) :

> ' That loss is common would not make
> My own less bitter, rather more :
> Too common ! Never morning wore
> To evening, but some heart did break.'

76. *secure of change.* Careless of change ; the Latin *securus* —free from care.

XVIII

Written in 1861 and published in 1864. Tennyson had visited this valley in the Pyrenees with Hallam in 1830. He let ' the two-and-thirty years ' stand, however, as the alteration to ' one-and-thirty ' would have spoiled the sound of the line.

XIX

Published in 1864. Spedding, however, quotes the first stanza with praise in a letter dated September 19, 1834.

XX

In 1869 Tennyson, Pritchard, and Knowles founded the Metaphysical Society, the object of which was that ' those who were ranged on the side of faith should meet those who were ranged on the side of unfaith, and freely interchange their views.' This poem was written for, and read at the

first meeting of, the Society on June 2, 1869. James Martineau wrote of Tennyson's poetry as 'releasing religious faith from imprisonment within tight propositions which define the Infinite.'

It will be noted how different this tentative question of Tennyson's, 'Is not the vision He?' is from the position of Wordsworth in *Tintern Abbey*, or of Coleridge in *Dejection*, or from the less systematic but no less real conception of Shelley that there is a Life which is Love pervading the universe. The 'glad confident morning' had passed away; science had shown a nature apparently at strife with God, 'red in tooth and claw,' and Tennyson can but 'faintly trust the larger hope.' He wins through to a firm faith in the end:

'I hope to see my Pilot face to face';

but it is from man and not from nature that he gains assurance. Not till George Meredith do we find man and nature once more in sympathy, and the poetry of the twentieth century, so far as we may at present judge of it, has rejected the scientific doubt of the Tennysonian period, and accepted, in a more impersonal form, the Wordsworthian creed. Cf. Laurence Binyon:

'There is no longer grief nor joy for me,
But one infinity of life that flows
From the deep ocean heart that no man knows
Out into these unnumbered semblances
Of earth and air, mountains and beasts and trees.'

XXI

Arthur Henry Hallam died at Vienna on September 15, 1833, in his twenty-third year. The son of Henry Hallam the historian, he was a man of great gifts, and much beloved by all his contemporaries at Cambridge. Tennyson's poem to his memory was published in 1850. 'The sections were written at many different places, and as the phases of our intercourse came to my memory and suggested them. . . . The different moods of sorrow, as in a drama, are dramatically given, and my conviction that fear, doubts, and suffering will find answer and relief only through faith in a God of Love' (*Memoir*, vol. i, p. 304).

Tennyson believed himself to be the discoverer of this metre, but it is found as early as Sidney, and the best example

of it, outside Tennyson, may be seen in Ben Jonson's *Elegy* (*Oxford Book of English Verse*, 189):

'Though beauty be the mark of praise,
And yours of whom I sing be such
As not the world can prize too much,
Yet 'tis your virtue now I raise.'

I

This refers to the bells 'ringing out the old year' on the third New Year's Eve after Hallam's death.

32. *the Christ that is to be.* Tennyson explains this as 'the broader Christianity of the future.'

2

4. *taints of blood*, i.e. inherited diseases.

15. *at last.* Cf. the last verse of the poem:

'And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.'

21. *The wish*, &c. The belief in immortality must be a divine instinct in us, because we should never be likely to form it for ourselves from our observations of nature.

38. *gather dust and chaff.* Reason is 'barren' when applied to this belief.

47. *the spirit.* 'Breath' is the literal translation of the Latin *spiritus*.

51. *who roll'd the psalm*, &c. Cf. *Omar Khayyam*, Fitz-Gerald's translation (*4th edition, 1879*):

'And that inverted Bowl they call the sky,
Whereunder crawling coop'd we live and die,
Lift not your hands to It for help—for It
As impotently moves as you or I.'

62. *dragons of the prime.* The monstrous creatures of the earth's early ages, such as the mammoth.

68. *the veil*, that conceals the Divine from our mortal eyes, as the goddess Isis was veiled from her worshippers, and as the Holy Place of the Temple at Jerusalem was curtained off from the gaze of the people.

3

4. *pillars*, i.e. of her house. Cf. *Proverbs* ix. 1: 'Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.'

12. *Pallas.* A reference to the Greek myth that Pallas,

the goddess of wisdom, sprang from the brain of Zeus, the King of all gods.

17. *higher hand*, i.e. of wisdom. Tennyson deplores, in *Locksley Hall*, that 'knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers.'

4

The whole universe is, as it were, one palace of the God of Love. His friend has but moved on into another of its many courts, 'another parish of the infinite.'

5

With this idea of the human and divine mingled in the memory of the dead, cf. the introductory verses:

'I trust he lives in Thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.'

13. *Thy voice*, &c. Cf. Shelley's *Adonais*:

'He is made one with Nature; there is heard
His voice in all her music,' &c.

(Stanzas 42, 43.)

29. *O living will*. This refers, says Tennyson, to 'that which we know as free-will in man.' This combination of the human and divine occurs again in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*:

'Forward, till you see that highest Human Nature is divine.'

31. *spiritual rock*. Cf. *The 1st Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* x. 4: 'They drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ.'

35. *conquer'd years*. Time that seems to separate us from all we love, is at last itself conquered, 'swallowed up' in eternity. Cf. sect. CXVI.

'O days and hours, your work is this,
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss.'

XXII

These lines are an experiment in the Greek metre called Alcaic, after the name of its inventor, Alcaeus, the lyric poet of Lesbos, who lived about 600 B.C. Only fragments of his

poetry remain. Tennyson has disregarded the form of Alcaic used by the Latin poet Horace, and claims that his own is nearer to the original Greek. 'No one,' says Professor Saintsbury, 'is ever likely to get nearer to the real thing.' See Saintsbury, *Manual of English Prosody*, and *History of English Prosody*.

7. *empyrean.* Milton's own word for the blue heaven, the domain of God and His angels.

8. *angel onset.* See Book VI of *Paradise Lost*, for the account of the great battle in heaven.

14. *ambrosial.* Sweet-scented.

XXIII

Published in 1855.

XXIV

The poem was first published on the day of the funeral, November 18, 1852. Into this ode Tennyson puts his own political creed and his own ideal of character. It should be compared with Wordsworth's *Happy Warrior*.

Tennyson was appointed Poet Laureate on Wordsworth's death in 1850, and this was one of his first 'official' poems; but it was written, he says expressly, 'from genuine admiration of the man.'

9. *London's central roar*, &c. In St. Paul's Cathedral, in the heart of the traffic of the city.

42. *World-victor.* Such Napoleon literally was in intention, though only partially in performance.

55. *The towering car.* The hearse was inscribed with the names of Wellington's battles in gold.

80. *Who is he?* These three lines are spoken by Nelson, whose tomb is conspicuous in St. Paul's.

99. *Assaye.* The battle of 1803 against the Mahratta Army, which was ten times as strong as Wellesley's.

104. *treble works.* The lines of Torres Vedras.

109. *wasted vines.* The vineyards of Spain laid waste by the French. It was the battle of Vittoria, in 1813, that decided the defeat of the French in the Peninsular War.

112. *eagle.* The emblem of the French Army during the Napoleonic Empire, adopted from the Roman use of it in their legions.

123. *Loud sabbath.* The day of Waterloo, Sunday, June 18, 1815.

125. *rocky square* refers to the formation of the British infantry against which the cavalry of Napoleon dashed in vain, like waves against a rock.

129. *jubilant ray.* At seven in the evening the Prussian reinforcements came up, and as they did so the sun broke through the clouds. Read the account in Creasy's *Decisive Battles.*

137. *Baltic and the Nile.* Nelson defeated the French in the battle of the Nile in 1798, and the Danes in the Baltic in 1801.

153. *brainless mobs and lawless Powers.* These were, to Tennyson, the two extremes to which any divergence from constitutional government rendered a nation liable. He said, in 1887: 'Action and Reaction is the miserable see-saw of our child-world.... Violent, selfish, unreasoning democracy would bring expensive bureaucracy, and the iron rule of a Cromwell.' In 1852 he had seen recently the Paris revolution (1848), and the usurpation of Napoleon III (1851), and these were his illustrations of the extremes here noted.

159. *brute control,* i.e. 'brainless mobs and lawless Powers.'

170. *wink no more.* A reference to the failure of the proposal made in 1852 to organize the militia, and generally strengthen the defence forces.

188. *Alfred,* i.e. Alfred the Great.

196. *stars,* i.e. decorations.

197. *horn,* i.e. the horn of plenty, or 'cornucopia,' with which Fortune is usually depicted.

259. *Giant Ages.* Cf. *In Memoriam,* CXVIII:

'Contemplate all this work of Time,' &c.

and CXXIII:

'There rolls the deep where grew the tree.'

267. *Dead March.* The funeral march from Handel's *Saul.*

270. *Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.* Taken from the service of the Church of England 'for the burial of the dead.'

XXV

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